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**Leader and Follower Perspectives of
Entrepreneurial Leadership:
How is gender experienced in small
firms?**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements of the University of
Northumbria at Newcastle for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

Research undertaken in
Newcastle Business School

October 2010

Abstract

This study aims to bring a gender perspective to the study of entrepreneurship and followers' perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership. The study contributes to emerging entrepreneurial leadership research considering gender, acknowledging follower involvement, individual agency, and recognising entrepreneurial leadership as a social process. Secondly, the study contributes further empirical research from a gender perspective of women entrepreneurs to the authentic leadership theory base. Against a backdrop of patriarchy, a theoretical gender lens is developed from understandings of (un)doing gender, doing gender well and doing gender differently. Elements from the gender, entrepreneurship and authentic leadership theory bases are fused to create an analytical framework to conceptualise and empirically explore women entrepreneurs' and followers' gendered experiences within entrepreneurial leadership. A Feminist Standpoint Research approach is taken, acknowledging the diversity and subjectivity of women's experiences to create new ways of viewing entrepreneurial leadership. The theoretical potential is developed through five case studies of women entrepreneurs and their followers, operating small businesses across North East England in sectors of IT, law, construction, beauty, and childcare. A two stage semi-structured interview process was implemented along with participant and researcher research diaries. The analytical framework was used as a sensitising device to the flux and fluidity of gender to analyse women entrepreneurs' and followers' voices. The study makes an original theoretical contribution to studies of entrepreneurial leadership by offering in-depth interpretations to identify new insights into discourses which shape women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership, highlighting gendered complexities within their experiences. A process of blending is offered as a further contribution, highlighting the temporal and fluxing nature of the discourses which shape women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership.

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List of Abbreviations

FSR	Feminist Standpoint Research
HE	Higher Education
UK	United Kingdom

Acknowledgements

To my Supervision Team, Professor Sharon Mavin and Jane Turner for their unwavering support, subject expertise, challenge and patience.

To the women entrepreneurs and their followers who gave so much of their time to participate in this research.

To my Line Manager Philip Shrives for his support.

To past and present Graduate Tutors: Dr David Hart, Matthew Sutherland, Dr Naomi Kirkup and Dr Steffi Macht for their friendship and collegiality.

To Dr Jannine Williams for her constructive feedback, words of encouragement and friendship.

To Dr Fiona Robson for always being there and giving me a sense of perspective when I had lost mine.

And finally to David, Louise, and my parents whose love and encouragement gave me the strength to continue.

Authors Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work.

Name: Nicola Patterson

Signature:

Date:

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research process of this study as I explore the research question: *Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?*

This chapter begins with an outline of my social context as I share my personal and work experiences, reflecting upon the values and beliefs which led me to study entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective and which has ultimately shaped the research focus and design (Peplau and Conrad, 1989; Cooper and Bosco, 1999). An overview of female entrepreneurship in the United Kingdom (UK hereafter) is then outlined, highlighting gaps within extant entrepreneurial leadership, entrepreneurship and authentic leadership theory for potential contribution. Understandings of the key concepts of patriarchy, gender and agency drawn upon in this study are provided. The context, potential contributions and conceptual understandings are drawn together to outline the research focus which informs the research parameters of this study. This is followed by a brief overview of the research approach, before the chapter concludes with a summary of each chapter to provide the reader with the structure of this thesis.

1.2 My Social Context: Shaping the Study

Within this section, I reflect upon my own experiences and life history to explore and make sense of my values and how they have led me to explore entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective. Firstly, I provide a brief personal overview before reflecting upon familial, education and work experiences to highlight my frustrations with social constructions of what it means to be a woman (and a man), entrepreneur and leader.

I am a white, heterosexual twenty-seven year old woman with no children (yet), who has lived, been educated and worked within the North East of England. I was raised around my parents' small business based within the family home, which they have operated for over 25 years. I was in full-time education until the age of 21, during which time I worked part-time in various roles from the age of 14. Upon graduation, I began work for a small Management and Research Consultancy business, located within and managing, a small Business Incubation Centre. I then moved into higher education (HE hereafter) working as an Enterprise Development Officer, before moving into my current role as an academic.

My family has been a great source of inspiration in developing my interest in small business and entrepreneurship. My great grandmother, grandparents and parents have all set up and led small businesses. I find my great grandmother's story particularly inspirational setting up and running her own business as a widow with two small children during the 1920s and 1930s in the North East. Stories of her strength, tenacity, work ethic, but lack of maternal skills have been told and retold, emphasising the success she achieved within her business and her 'lacking' as a mother. Therefore, where she was success in one sense, she was perceived to have 'failed' in her social role expectations as a mother.

Being raised in and around my parents' small construction business in the family home, I was part of everyday practices and interactions. Whilst the business is a partnership, my father leads the business, built on the premise that it is my father's reputation within the industry which attracts and retains clients. The division of labour within the business is reflective of the gender social order; my mother is responsible for administrative duties, the more private and silent business responsibilities, whilst my father leads on more public roles, developing client relationships, sales and project management.

My mother has been and continues to be a major influence and role model in my life. She often reflects upon her decision to stop work and be a stay-at-home mum when I was born, to raise my sister and I. Whilst she enjoyed the time watching and caring for us as children, she regrets not maintaining the social and financial independence she believes is gained from employment. My mother has always had an active role within the business, but, also took on various part-time roles when my sister and I were of school age to gain social and financial independence. On each occasion, she always left employment because the business required her to return on a more full-time basis.

However, over the years my mother has voiced her increasing lack of interest in the business due to her undervalued role and the nature of a construction business, resulting in her slow withdrawal from some aspects of the business. Consequently, my mother has emphasised the importance to both my sister and I, of ensuring social and financial independence and gaining meaning from our working lives.

As I reflected upon my familial stories and experiences, it seemed that women who are able to maintain social and financial independence such as my great grandmother are perceived to lack the required 'mothering' skills and those who do embrace their role as a mother themselves feel they lack meaning and independence.

My education (from primary school to HE) was built upon an understanding of equality, but, where girls outperformed boys academically. Leaving full-time education and entering into full time employment where I felt discrimination was inherent, challenged all that I knew in relation to equality. My male friends appeared to leave University and gain managerial employment with ease, whilst my female friends struggled to gain the same level of entry and opted for administrative roles. During my own experiences of employment, particularly in relation to networking, I became aware of my difference, and how I was defined by my appearance first rather than my skills and abilities. My dress and make up would be a constant source of comment by clients increasing my awareness of my 'difference' as a young woman. I felt my education had failed to explore issues of gender within organisational practices.

It was my experience working as an Enterprise Development Officer, within a University Enterprise Centre supporting university students and graduates to start-up in business in the North East, where my interest in researching women entrepreneurs began. It increased my awareness of national and regional initiatives promoting women's accession into entrepreneurship (e.g. Department of Trade and Industry, 2003; Harding, 2007a) as a means of sustaining national economic growth. The data collated by the Enterprise Centre showed equal numbers of enquires made by women and men, with a higher than national average percentage in women start-ups. This conveyed a positive picture of the service in relation to supporting and encouraging women to enter entrepreneurship. However, as part of my role, I tracked the number of start-ups post three years of trading; all of the women entrepreneurs had ceased trading. This is a pattern that is indicative at a national level, as whilst the number of women entering entrepreneurship in the UK increased over the past decade, the number of women owned businesses has not (Harding, 2007a; Shaw *et al.*, 2007).

The lack of research exploring *how* and *why* this was occurring led me to focus my Masters dissertation on women entrepreneurs' original start-up motivations when making the career transition from professional employment to entrepreneurship. I explored the women's post-hoc reflections of their career transition experiences and whether their original motivations for starting up in business were realised as they continued to run their businesses beyond the start-up phase. The findings highlighted that the women's original motivations were not met, but their confidence and independence had increased as a result of the transition.

As I immersed myself in the female entrepreneurship literature during my Masters, there was a lack of research exploring the lived experiences of women entrepreneurs in relation to leadership, and furthermore, exploring others' perceptions of their leadership. This reading suggested that there is a need to explore experiences of female entrepreneurship which are not necessarily related to the start-up phase or driven directly by an economic logic, such as leadership, to understand the socio-cultural practices which shape experiences of gender.

My migration into research provided me with an opportunity to explore and make sense of the thoughts and questions from my family and educational experiences to at least begin to understand the frustrations I was experiencing working within enterprise development.

The process of writing this thesis is my own resistance to what I now understand to be the masculine hegemony I have experienced within my own life history. In exploring entrepreneurial leadership in small firms, this study will provide understandings of how gender is experienced which will support my own reflections of how I resist or conform to social norms.

The context of female entrepreneurship in the UK is outlined in the next section to provide a background to the study.

1.3 Research Context: Female Entrepreneurship in the UK

Over one million women in the UK work for themselves, accounting for 27% of the self employed population (Prowess, 2008); however, women entrepreneurs account for just 6.8% of the UK's working age population (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2004). Within this study the term woman entrepreneur leader is understood to be a woman who has founded (Vecchio, 2003), currently owns and leads at least one small business.

Women are only half as likely to become involved in starting up a business as men, with only 6.7% of women in the UK owning or managing their own business (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2004). Entrepreneurial activity is at its lowest amongst white women in particular at only 3.6% of all women, compared to the most entrepreneurial female group of 'other Black' at 29.9% (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2004).

Given the low numbers of women starting up and owning their own business in the UK, the Government identified women as a key source of economic growth (Department for Trade and Industry, 2003; Harding, 2007a) within their enterprise strategy (Prowess, 2008). UK Government initiatives and entrepreneurship research have predominantly examined barriers and challenges that women face when starting up in business (Graham, 2005; Marlow and Patton, 2005; Shaw *et al.*, 2001; Brush, 1997) to support more women to enter entrepreneurship and, therefore, boost the UK economy. However, whilst the number of women entering entrepreneurship in the UK has increased over the past decade, the number of women owned businesses has not (Harding, 2007a; Shaw *et al.*, 2007). This has been attributed to women being more susceptible to higher exit rates and subsequently running less sustainable businesses (Shaw *et al.*, 2007) than men (Prowess, 2008). Furthermore, Prowess's (2008) Women's Enterprise Mentoring Report notes that the growth in new women owned businesses is not being sustained. Women are positioned as a paradox, simultaneously thought of as *the* solution and *the* problem to entrepreneurship in the UK.

Increasing economic growth is drawn upon as the primary rationale and focus of extant female entrepreneurship studies, with just 8% of female entrepreneurship articles (Ahl, 2006) focusing on the underdeveloped gendered nature of entrepreneurship (Marlow *et al.*, 2009). Such an economic focus masks gendered practices embedded within wider socio-cultural systems set against a patriarchal backcloth (discussed in Chapters Two and Three). Consequently, concepts of 'entrepreneurship' and 'entrepreneur' have been historically and culturally produced and reproduced on masculine terms (Mirchandani, 1999; Ahl, 2002; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a, 2004b; Lewis, 2006, 2009).

The gender binary, understood to be the hierarchical positioning of masculinity over femininity, whereby what we affirm to one we implicitly deny to the other, provides the basis of cultural meaning as men and women are sex role stereotyped to masculinity and femininity respectively (Gherardi, 1994). The masculine norm of entrepreneurship is therefore utilised as the "yardstick" (Mirchandani, 1999: 233) from which to measure the extent to which women demonstrate 'successful' – masculine – entrepreneurial traits and behaviour (Mirchandani, 1999).

Masculinity, as the assumed norm, has become invisible within entrepreneurial activities (Lewis, 2006), enabling 'entrepreneur' and 'man' to become interchangeable terms (Ahl, 2002; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a, Bruni *et al.*, 2004b), as the dominant discourse 'think entrepreneur', 'think male' has been created and perpetuated (Marlow *et al.*, 2009). Both women and men entrepreneurs are orientated to start and run small businesses (Lewis, 2006) but, within the gendered construction of entrepreneurship, non-growth orientation is deemed to be non-entrepreneurial and labelled inferior, devalued and therefore aligned with femininity and women. The lack of growth potential or desire is essentialised as women's problem (Ahl, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Lee-Gosselin and Grise, 1990) rather than a wider socio-cultural structural problem (de Bruin *et al.*, 2007).

Whilst sex comparison research and studies focused on the start-up phase are useful in terms of highlighting gender on the entrepreneurial agenda and addressing symptoms of wider socio-cultural structures of patriarchy, it essentialises women and men and the social order is maintained.

Further research highlighting the gendered nature of entrepreneurship, and focusing on issues beyond the start-up phase, is required to further understandings of wider socio cultural systems, which influence female entrepreneurship within the UK and support women at varying stages of the business lifecycle to address issues relating to longer term sustainability (Harding, 2007a). Leadership is thought to be a key element in achieving longer term success (Applebaum, Audet and Miller, 2003) and, therefore, will be explored within the context of female entrepreneurship to provide understandings of how gender is experienced. An overview of key areas of the literature is provided in the next section to locate this study within existing theory bases.

1.4 Entrepreneurial Leadership

Leadership within entrepreneurship is a neglected area (Daily *et al.*, 2002; Jensen and Luthans, 2006; Jones and Crompton, 2008), with some relatively recent exceptions (e.g. Jones and Crompton, 2008; Chen, 2007; Jensen and Luthans, 2006; Fernald *et al.*, 2005; Coglisier and Brigham, 2004; Gupta *et al.*, 2004; Vecchio, 2003; Daily *et al.*, 2002), none of which have analysed the nexus of leadership and entrepreneurship (Coglisier and Brigham, 2004) from a gender perspective.

This thesis draws upon Vecchio's (2003) and Czarniawska-Joerges and Wolff's (1991) understanding of entrepreneurial leadership that "entrepreneurship is leadership within a narrow, specific context", which has frequently been neglected by both the entrepreneurship and leadership theory bases (Vecchio, 2003: 324). In this thesis entrepreneurial leadership is understood to be the intertwined process of entrepreneurship and leadership which "cannot be reduced to the independent contributions either of people or of contexts" (Hosking and Morley, 1991: 63) but highlights "emergent patterning of relationships and interactions" (Chia, 1995: 588), "struggles and contestations" (Chia, 1995: 595) between women entrepreneurs as leaders and their followers.

There are a number of historical and conceptual parallels between the two fields of entrepreneurship and leadership (Vecchio, 2003; Coglisier and Brigham, 2004) with specific parallels between the women in leadership and female entrepreneurship literatures.

Cogliser and Brigham (2004) identified a historical overlap between the two theory bases in relation to their initial focus on traits or personality attributes, which differentiate individuals as leaders or entrepreneurs (Vecchio, 2003). Against a backdrop of patriarchy, leadership and entrepreneurship have been shaped by the symbolic universe of masculinity. Consequently, women learn to become entrepreneurs and leaders against a masculine backdrop (Bryans and Mavin, 2003) highlighting the gendered development within both fields. I understand 'gendered' to be processes and practices which embody the attributes society most commonly attributes to one sex over another, with conceptions of masculinities tied to the bodies of men and femininities tied to the bodies of women (Gherardi, 1994) being reflected and reinforced (Maier, 1999: 71) through organising processes.

Given the masculine backdrop against which both female entrepreneurship and women in leadership theory bases have developed, both fields of research have highlighted women's strategies to eradicate or suppress their perceived gender (Hekman, 1997a; Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Within the women in leadership literature, Jorgenson's (2002) study highlights women engineers' denial of gender in order to blend in and belong. This is further supported by Olsson and Walker's (2004) research which contends that senior women executives play down gender and Bligh and Kohles' (2008) research which highlights how US women political candidates suppress their femininity to break with stereotypical conceptions of a woman in order to be perceived as a more credible candidate to the voting public. In the female entrepreneurship theory base, Lewis' (2006) study highlights women entrepreneurs' refusal to accept that gender is relevant to their experiences of entrepreneurship by keeping gender out. Both fields, therefore, work within the given gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b) in order to gain legitimacy within their leadership or entrepreneurial roles, enabling the gender social order to remain unchallenged.

In both areas, scholars have highlighted at a conceptual level, the need to disrupt masculine hierarchical superiority (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) to break free from the gendered social role expectations that constrain women (and men) within the binary and make women (and men) prisoners of gender (Gherardi, 1994). Within the female entrepreneurship literature, Ahl (2006) asserts that discussions focused upon how the social order could be disrupted are scarcely addressed and calls for further research.

In the women in leadership theory base Due Billing and Alvesson (2000) highlight the need to remain cognisant of the gender labels we attribute and its consequences. Furthermore, Baxter and Hughes (2004) acknowledge the need to move beyond current dualistic thinking to recognise a blend of masculinities and femininities are required for effective leadership and are open to both men and women. Given the masculine backcloth from which the women in leadership and female entrepreneurship fields have developed, and the recognised need to disrupt masculine hierarchal superiority (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004), a central assumption that I, as the researcher, bring to this thesis is that “entrepreneurship research can be advanced and legitimized by studying the nexus of the various dimensions” with leadership (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004: 789) from a gender perspective.

Leadership is a vast and mature literature base (Hunt and Dodge, 2000); therefore, in this thesis I will focus upon the emerging concept of authentic leadership (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Shamir and Eilam, 2005; Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005).

Authentic leadership is an emerging theory of leadership and is argued to be a process whereby “one acts in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings” (Harter, 2002: 382), transparently relating to followers, fostering the development of their authenticity and contributing to their well being (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Sparrowe, 2005). Authentic leadership research is based upon the assumption that a leader’s self reference “will automatically be communicated to followers, who will experience the leader as authentic” (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010: 65).

Authentic leadership recognises leadership as a social process of emerging relationships and interactions (Chia, 1995: 588), which “chart ongoing struggles and contestations intrinsic to the organizing process” (Chia 1995: 595). This aligns with my epistemological orientation and also enables experiences of women entrepreneurs to be explored alongside perceptions of followers against a backcloth of patriarchy and gender. Authentic leadership is, therefore, understood to be a complex and reciprocal process that cannot be deduced to the actions or behaviours of individuals or within contexts (Hosking and Morley, 1991), highlighting the importance of both women entrepreneurs’ experiences and followers’ perceptions. Owing to its relational focus, authentic leadership is an appropriate concept to explore women entrepreneurs’ experiences and followers’ perceptions of gender within the gender dualisms.

There is a lack of empirical authentic leadership research set within an organisational context, with a predominance of extant conceptual studies (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Roberts *et al.*, 2009; Yammarino *et al.*, 2008). Eagly's (2005) conceptual research is the only study that explores authentic leadership from a gender perspective, but is yet to be empirically explored. Jensen and Luthans' (2006) empirical research is the only study which investigates authentic leadership within the context of entrepreneurial leadership but does not consider it from a gender perspective. Furthermore, extant authentic leadership research considers follower assessments of leader authenticity in relation to measurable variables e.g. the amount of time spent with a leader (Jensen and Luthans, 2006), but does not consider follower interpretations from a gender perspective.

Understanding followers' gendered interpretations of their leader is important as often a leader's external (body) (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997) and internal (values, emotions, motives and goals) sense of self is not always clear to followers (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010; Avolio *et al.*, 2004).

An assumption that followers willingly accept leaders' values and beliefs for the group, organisation or community (Eagly, 2005), overlooks amongst other issues, the gendered nature of leadership and follower agency. Neglecting to consider followers' agency and their gendered interpretations of women leader's values and behaviour and whether they deem their behaviour appropriate in relation to their gender social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) and leadership role, distorts the realities of women entrepreneurs' lived experiences by disregarding how their experiences are shaped by followers expectations and responses to their perceived successes or failures within entrepreneurial leadership. This is because gender social role expectations placed upon women to be feminine (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) is in opposition to masculine leadership expectations. Within the gender binary, followers interpret and evaluate women's authenticity against the leadership social norm of masculinity and their gender role of femininity as women (Eagly, 2005). Consequently, to align with their gender social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) women are 'expected' to behave in feminine ways, which often labels them ineffective leaders (Mavin, 2009b). If women are masculine their behaviour is deemed effective for their leadership role, however, they jolt our assumptions (Mavin, 2009a; 2009b) as their behaviour contradicts their gender social role expectations as women. Women must contend with performing under the leadership mantle whilst also convincing others that they are conforming "to expectations concerning appropriate female behaviour" (Eagly, 2005: 469).

Exploring authentic leadership is thought to be most appropriate in organisations with simple structures (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Jensen and Luthans, 2006) for example small businesses, as they facilitate the cascading effect from leaders to followers required by authentic leadership (Jensen and Luthans, 2006). The close proximity of the working environment, increases leaders' visibility and personal contact with followers making it more likely for their authenticity to be analyzed (Jones and Crompton, 2008). Jensen and Luthans (2006) contend that applying authentic leadership within the entrepreneurship and small business context will prepare leaders to better withstand the challenges of new businesses. Furthermore, Jensen and Luthans appreciate the effect on followers, in relation to their personal and social identification with their leader's life stories to enable the development of trust to engage in risk taking behaviours (Avolio *et al.*, 2004). Consequently, empirical developments of authentic leadership can be explored within a small business environment.

I therefore argue that the development of a theoretical gender lens to research experiences of entrepreneurial leadership from women entrepreneurs' and their followers' perspectives could contribute to studies of entrepreneurship, leadership and authentic leadership in the process of highlighting its potential contribution to studies of entrepreneurial leadership.

Against a patriarchal backcloth, this research will bring a gender perspective to the study of female entrepreneurship and their followers' perceptions of their entrepreneurial leadership. The aim is firstly to contribute to the emerging entrepreneurial leadership literature by considering gender and acknowledging follower involvement, agency and recognising entrepreneurial leadership as a social process. Secondly, to contribute empirical research from a gender perspective of women entrepreneurs, to the authentic leadership theory base.

Before moving on to outline the research focus and parameters, consideration of the key conceptual understandings of; patriarchy, gender, individual agency and gender within organisations and leadership, drawn upon within this study are discussed within the next section.

1.5 Key Conceptual Understandings

1.5.1 Patriarchy

Katila and Merilainen (2002: 351) describe a way of understanding patriarchy as “a discourse that is everywhere and nowhere at the same time. It is not something you can permanently nail down but rather something that is constantly shifting”. I therefore understand patriarchy to be a “system of social structures, and practices” (Walby, 1989: 214) which create and sustain a “pervasive cultural condition in which women’s lives [are] either misrepresented or not represented at all” (Butler, 1990: 1) within organisations. Patriarchy positions men as ‘natural’ and ‘legitimate’ figures of authority, enabling male dominance at a societal and organisational level to flourish as men are able to access and maintain positions of power and privilege (Simpson and Lewis, 2005).

A hierarchal structure between the sexes is, therefore, created and sustained whereby women are subordinated to men who are positioned as the norm (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997) and ‘One’, consequently labelling women the non-norm and the ‘Other’ (Butler, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1953). This societal order is reflected in organisational structures with women “discursively characterized as ‘lacking’ in relation to the characteristics required for the professional identity” (Katila and Merilainen, 1999: 165).

Therefore, I contend that patriarchy provides a background to everyday lives, and consequently the background to this research. Male dominance within organisations has become so deeply embedded within socio-cultural understandings that it has become invisible (Simpson and Lewis, 2005). Only by taking a more critical approach through a gender lens can women begin to voice their lived experiences (Nicolson, 1996) and challenge patriarchal constraints (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004).

1.5.2 Gender

The understanding of gender that I bring to this thesis is that of socially constructed characteristics of masculinities and femininities (Fonow and Cook, 2005; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; Jackson and Scott, 2002; Lorber and Farrell, 1991; Butler, 1990) and a product of historic, social and cultural meanings (Jackson and Scott, 2002; Gherardi, 1994). Gender is understood as “socially produced distinctions between male and female, masculine and feminine” (Acker, 1992: 250; Simpson and Lewis, 2005; Ahl, 2006).

Gender is not biologically determined (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000) or something that people *are*, but rather something they *do* (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Butler, 1990; Maier, 1999) in their everyday lives, independent of sex¹ (Delphy and Leonard, 2002). However, processes and practices that embody the attributes, which society most commonly associates with one sex over another, is referred to as gendered as they “reflect and reinforce prevailing conceptions of masculinity and femininity” (Maier, 1999: 71).

Masculinities e.g. “hard, dry, impersonal, objective, explicit, outer focused, action-orientated, analytical” (Hines, 1992: 328) and femininities e.g. nurturing, empathy, compassion (Grant, 1988), co-operation, interdependence, acceptance, emotion, (Marshall, 1993) are “forms of subjectivities...that are present in all persons, men as well as women” (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997: 85). They “offer an alternative to the variable-orientated fixation on ‘men’ and ‘women’ using the bodies as a firm criterion for classification” (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997: 82). Thus, enabling social flux, allowing both women and men to continuously enter spaces of masculinity and femininity as they maintain a dual presence (Gherardi, 1994). I understand subjectivity to be a perspective whereby knowledge is of a personal nature (Belenky *et al.*, 1986), situated in specific social contexts (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2004). It provides an alternative to the positivist notion of knowledge building, that there is a “fixed and unchanging social reality”, by laying emphasis on specific experiences and perspectives of individuals (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007: 13).

Gender is drawn upon within this thesis as a theoretical lens in order to differentiate from understandings which conflate gender with sex as a variable, to understand ‘doing gender’ (West and Zimmerman, 1987) and the ‘gender we do’ as social practices accomplished through actions (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Martin, 2006; Czarniawska, 2006; Jeanes, 2007). Through gender practice, understood to be “roles, norms and ideals relative to gender...when they involve action – that is, when they are actively done, said or interpreted” (Martin, 2006: 270), people conform to or rebel against institutionalised gender status (Martin, 2006).

¹Sex “is the anatomical and physiological characteristic which signifies biological maleness and femaleness” (Jackson and Scott, 2002: 9).

Martin (2006) draws a distinction between gender practice and gender practicing, to highlight and challenge the current social order (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Gender practices are characterised as cultural resources available to 'do gender' through words, deeds and interpretations, gender practising is gender constituted through interaction i.e. in the saying, doing and interpreting i.e. gender "practice in action" (Martin, 2006: 259). Making a distinction between gender practices and gender practising highlights the fluidity of gender, as practising "is done in real time and space" (Martin, 2006: 258) once it has been done, it cannot be retracted. Gender practice and practise is emergent in nature, often without reflexive engagement (Martin, 2006; 2003; Czarniawska, 2006; Nencel, 2010).

Non-reflexivity of gender practice and practising draws attention to the ways in which doing gender can be harmful for women in relation to felt exclusion, exhaustion and being cast as different (Martin, 2006). People "do not simply think about such things; they do them" (Martin, 2006: 259), and are often not fully aware of the gender (masculinities and femininities) in their action (Nencel, 2010).

Doing gender has been utilised to demonstrate the maintenance of gender relations, becoming "a theory of conformity and gender conventionality" (Deutsch, 2007: 108). Consequently, even when an individual contravenes their sex role stereotype, they are still doing gender (Deutsch, 2007). It therefore becomes difficult to understand how the gender social order can ever be disrupted (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Greater attention to how women go against their socially perceived sex category and socially perceived gender – *undoing* gender – is required to understand how such behaviour jolts our assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) of what we deem to be appropriate behaviour for women. Understanding gender practice and practise is critical to surface assumptions, articulate, highlight and challenge more subtle forms of the gender we *do* (Martin, 2003; 2006) and the gender we *undo* (Risman, 2009) to recognise *how* individuals *do* and *undo* gender (Messerschmidt, 2009), exercising agency by complying or resisting gender norms (Martin, 2006).

1.5.3 Agency

Agency in gender research recognises the active role of individuals (Linstead and Thomas, 2002), in relation to their behaviour and independently making their own decisions to comply to or resist gender norms (Martin, 2006). Whilst I acknowledge the influence that social structures, such as patriarchy, have upon individual's thoughts and behaviours, I also recognise individuals' agency against this backcloth. Individuals are not "passive victims" of structures (Leckenby and Hesse-Biber 2007:257); there are a myriad of factors which influence their decisions and behaviour. I therefore understand individual agency to be an individual's ability to act, make decisions, struggle with, influence, accept or reject (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002) gender social role expectations against a backcloth of patriarchy.

As Leavy (2007: 95) contends, subjects have "revolutionary potential that is, political capability, resistive possibility, indeed agency". This understanding enables the exploration of how women entrepreneurs and followers act, make decisions, struggle with, influence, accept or reject (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002) gender social role expectations against a backcloth of patriarchy, which will contribute towards answering the overall research question, "Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?". Agency is not tangible or visible, but demonstrated through both women entrepreneurs' and follower voices (Leavy, 2007), (re)constructing their actions and beliefs.

In this thesis I firstly aim to bring a gender perspective to the study of female entrepreneurship and their followers' perceptions of their entrepreneurial leadership. The study will, therefore, contribute to emerging entrepreneurial leadership research considering gender, acknowledging follower involvement, individual agency and recognising entrepreneurial leadership as a process. A further aim of the study is to contribute further empirical research from a gender perspective of women entrepreneurs to the authentic leadership theory base.

1.5.4 Gender in Organisations and Leadership

Given the patriarchal backcloth outlined above, socio-cultural understandings of gender being biologically determined have extended into organisations, shaping job role expectations, resulting in automatic recognition of gender stereotypes within organisations (Powell *et al.*, 2008). Biological femaleness is, therefore, tied to the symbolic universe of femininity within the private realm, where societal expectations of women rest with reproduction, silence and obedience (Gherardi, 1994). Consequently, biological maleness is tied to masculinities and the public realm, where social role expectations lie with production, command and voice (Gherardi, 1994) apt for the organisational context in relation to leadership effectiveness and entrepreneurial success. Organisational processes and practices that embody the attributes which society most commonly associates with one sex over another are referred to as gendered as they “reflect and reinforce prevailing conceptions of masculinity and femininity” (Maier, 1999: 71).

Given the masculine hegemony inherent within a patriarchal backcloth and my understanding of gender, it is important to note that whilst power is not the focus of this study it is considered to be implicit throughout the thesis. The maintenance of biological difference between men and women creates and sustains gendered understandings of a social order which subordinates women to men, affirming organisational power to men and, therefore, denying power to women (Gherardi, 1994). However, as Alvesson and Due Billing (1997) contend power should be understood as a continual interacting process between people in organisations and is, therefore, understood to be implicit within individuals’ agency; to make choices, shape, resist or accept gender social role expectations against a backcloth of patriarchy.

Discourses of leadership have reinforced male suitability and effectiveness, normalising masculinity and men (Calas and Smircich, 1996) making it difficult to separate leadership and men (Eagly and Carli, 2007). Eagly (1987) and later Eagly *et al.*, (2000) conceptualise the term social role theory to understand why women and men behave differently and adopt different roles. Eagly *et al.*, (2000: 124) argue women and men adopt roles which “reflect the sexual division of labour and gender hierarchy of society” (Eagly *et al.*, 2000: 124). Women are aligned with domestic/unpaid labour associated with femininity and still take primary responsibility for family life (Eagly and Carli, 2007). Consequently, Eagly *et al.*, (2000) suggest that women behave as homemakers (and men as breadwinners) working within gendered understandings of what is deemed appropriate behaviour for their sex (Eagly and Karau, 2002).

Leadership is constructed on masculine terms positioning men as legitimate leaders (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000). Leadership is, therefore, not synonymous with femininities, the domestic sphere of family life (Eagly and Carli, 2007), therefore, women in organisations are marginalised and disadvantaged (Martin, 2006) as the attributes most commonly associated with women are deemed ineffective and unsuitable (Schnurr, 2008) for leadership.

The understanding brought to this thesis is, therefore, that women and men's knowledge of entrepreneurship and leadership has developed against a masculine backdrop of patriarchy (Bryans and Mavin, 2003), engaging in gender practices which support and sustain a structure of unequal power relations (Kerfoot and Knights, 1993). This study also recognises that followers' expectations and interpretations of what is appropriate female, entrepreneurial and leadership behaviour have been shaped by a patriarchal backcloth.

The next section draws upon the research context, the key areas identified for potential contribution within the extant theory base and the key conceptual understandings outlined above, to position the research focus of the study.

1.6 Research Focus

Having identified gaps within female entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership research and the potential contribution of fusing the three areas of literature through a gender lens. This study offers an opportunity to conceptualise and empirically explore how gender is experienced from women entrepreneurs' and followers' perspectives to understand how the subjective individual makes sense of entrepreneurial leadership within the small firm context. In particular, the study focuses upon women entrepreneurs' location within patriarchy and gender and their follower's perceptions of them in relation to gender stereotypes. Whilst the thesis understands entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership as social processes, therefore, requiring the inclusion of women entrepreneurs and their follower's perspectives, women entrepreneurs' experiences are the focus of the study.

Small businesses, small firms, or small enterprises² provide the setting of this study given that they account for almost all of enterprises in the UK at 99.3%, and specifically accounting for 47.5% of employment and 37.4% of turnover (Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2008). Small business is understood in relation to the Companies Act 2006 with regard employee numbers 0-49 employees (BERR, 2008).

I therefore contend that “entrepreneurship research can be advanced and legitimized by studying the nexus” with leadership (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004: 789) from a gender perspective. Given the women’s position, setting up and leading their businesses, this study understands entrepreneurship and leadership to be intertwined processes, developed against a patriarchal backcloth. Extant female entrepreneurship research is mainly positivist (Ahl, 2006), with a small and emerging subjective research base.

Leadership is a vast body of research; therefore, this study focuses upon the concept of authentic leadership as it is an emerging and under-researched area of leadership, which does not include gender and lacks research from an entrepreneurial context. Furthermore, authentic leadership’s relational focus enables experiences of women entrepreneurs to be explored alongside perceptions of their followers, against a backcloth of patriarchy and gender. Through this thesis, I explore the intersection of the three areas of literature, gender, entrepreneurship and authentic leadership; provide the focus of this study to ground women’s experiences of entrepreneurial leadership historically, socially and culturally (Lewis, 2009). This research focus informs the research parameters of the study which are outlined in the next section.

1.7 Research Parameters

Having outlined the focus and potential contributions of this study I now outline the research question, aims and objectives that guide this study:

Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?

² The terms small business, small firms and small enterprises are used synonymously throughout this thesis.

The following aims will be addressed throughout this research:

- Provide a gender perspective to the study of female entrepreneurship and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership.
- Contribute to emerging entrepreneurial leadership research considering gender, acknowledging follower involvement, individual agency and recognising entrepreneurial leadership as a social process.
- Contribute further empirical research from a gender perspective of women entrepreneurs to the authentic leadership theory base.

The research aims are further supported by the following research objectives intended to direct the focus of the thesis:

- To critically review the gender, entrepreneurship, authentic leadership literatures before merging the three theory bases through which women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership can be theorised.
- To develop a gender lens, against a backdrop of patriarchy, to explore women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership to contribute new insights to studies of entrepreneurial leadership.
- To design an appropriate methodology, to explore subjective experiences of women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective.
- To gather empirical data of women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership in small businesses.
- To offer in-depth interpretations of women entrepreneur's and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership in small businesses through a gender lens.
- To identify insights from the empirical study of women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership, which contribute to understandings of entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective.

- To identify how women entrepreneurs and followers engage with discourses and interpret how these discourses shape entrepreneurial leadership experiences from a gender perspective
- Through the development of the thesis, to provide original theoretical and empirical contributions to gender in leadership, gender in entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership from a gender perspective.

The section that follows outlines the research approach and how the study will be implemented to satisfy the above research aims and objectives and answer the overall research question.

1.8 The Research Approach

My understanding and identification with a paradigm of subjectivism grounds this study and shapes my feminist research approach. Individuals ascribe meaning to the everyday world that they experience and that reality is a product of one's mind (Burrell and Morgan 1979: 1). Through an individual's social construction and reconstruction, reality is what the beholder perceives it to be (Holden and Lynch, 2004; Morgan and Smircich 1980). The epistemological aim is to understand the lived experiences of women entrepreneurs' and their followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership, allowing them to construct and reconstruct their subjective realities. As Crotty (1998: 28) clearly states "the scientific world is not, of course, the everyday world that people experience", therefore, it is imperative that the focus of the study is to understand how *subjective* individuals make sense of their experiences.

A case study strategy is adopted, consisting of five case studies of individual women entrepreneurs and associated followers. Qualitative research methods will be implemented including; a two stage semi-structured interview, research diaries and participant observation.

A central concern of this research is to understand how discourses shape our thinking, attitudes and behaviour (Simpson and Lewis, 2007), supporting understandings of what modes of thinking and behaviour are deemed to be acceptable (Simpson and Lewis, 2005) within the entrepreneurial leadership process from a gender perspective. Discourses in this thesis are understood to be “social arena in which common understandings are manifest in language, social practices and structures” (Fletcher 1999: 143). They are understood to provide “the conditions of possibility that determine what can be said, by whom and when” (Hardy and Phillips, 2004: 301) creating truth effects (Kelan, 2008).

Given the understandings of gender and patriarchy which frame this thesis, I draw upon feminist standpoint research (FSR hereafter) with an aim of providing space from which women are able to voice their experiences to “contextualise [their] lives and explain the constraints” (Nicolson, 1996: 23).

In this thesis FSR is understood to place emphasis upon women’s situated knowledge which Naples (2007) argues, provides the foundation from which to begin political debates. It enables women to “speak from multiple standpoints, producing multiple knowledge, without preventing women from coming together to work for specific political goals” (Hekman, 1997: 363). As Buzzanell (2003) contends FSR develops feminist agendas by making sense of commonalities of women’s lives without denying their diversity (Stanley and Wise, 1993). The concept of positionality (McCorkel and Myers, 2003) is drawn upon as an approach to explore and understand situated knowledge claims. It requires me, as a researcher, to make my assumptions, motivations, narratives and relations transparent (McCorkel and Myers, 2003). By placing emphasis on how my position permeates this research, and the knowledge production process enables greater understanding of how I select, write and silence participants’ voices (McCorkel and Myers, 2003; Harding, 1997). By engaging in strong reflexivity I am able to reflect upon the different ways her positionality can serve as both a hindrance and resource toward advancing knowledge (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007).

By taking a FSR approach, this study surfaces women's consciousness into being (Collins, 1997) whilst acknowledging the diversity and subjectivity of women's individual experiences (Brooks, 2007; Harding, 2007; Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007). This enables the creation of new knowledge towards cultivating social and political change (Crasnow, 2008; Brooks, 2007; Fonow and Cook, 2005; Hurley 1999) to challenge the established gender social order (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) towards answering the research question "Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?"

In taking an FSR approach this thesis has the potential to highlight and challenge dominant conceptual frameworks of gender relations providing "a methodological resource for explicating how relations of domination contour women's everyday lives" (Naples, 2007: 580). Its concern lies with locating standpoints in specific communities, owing much attention to the interconnectivity of gender, race and class (Harding, 1997; Naples, 2007). However, whilst I recognise race and class cannot be separated from gender relations but are implicit and surfaced within doing gender as people struggle with inequalities within organisations (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), this is not the focus of this study.

The analysis will focus upon the intersections of doing and undoing gender, entrepreneurship and authentic leadership, highlighting how gender is done and undone to address the research question 'Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms' within experiences of entrepreneurial leadership. Potter's (2004) discourse ingredients; variation, rhetoric, accountability and stake and interest will be drawn upon to surface potential complexities and tensions of gender within women entrepreneur's and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership.

1.9 Overview of Thesis Structure

This thesis comprises eight chapters; a summary of each chapter is outlined below. Each chapter links to a research objective(s) highlighted above to contribute towards answering the overall research question which guides this study.

Chapter One began with an outline of my social context to convey how my personal, education and work experiences led me to study female entrepreneurship. The context of female entrepreneurship in the UK was then provided before an overview of the key literature areas; gender, entrepreneurship and authentic leadership were considered to locate the study within existing theory bases. Key conceptual understandings were outlined to provide the backcloth to this thesis before being drawn together with the research context and areas highlighted for potential contribution, to outline the research focus and present the research parameters. An overview of the research approach was provided before this section which outlines the thesis structure.

Chapter Two provides a review of the gender and leadership theory base relating to patriarchy, doing and undoing gender, leadership as a masculine concept, the emergence of feminine forms of leadership and the inherent complexities and tensions when attempting to disrupt the gender binary. An analytical framework of doing and undoing gender is offered as a theoretical lens that sensitises the researcher to understand the complexities of gender.

In **Chapter Three**, the entrepreneurship literature is reviewed in relation to gender highlighting its masculine construction. The appropriateness of taking a gender perspective within this thesis is then highlighted as the intertwined nature of gender and entrepreneurship is outlined. The gendered development of entrepreneurship is illustrated through the rise of meritocracy with the discussion highlighting authenticity as a useful concept to understand women's agency. The need for a feminist perspective within the field to develop entrepreneurship theoretically and empirically is discussed. This is followed by an outline of the benefits for converging the leadership and entrepreneurship fields to explore experiences of entrepreneurial leadership, before highlighting extant gendered developments. The chapter concludes by outlining how the gender, authentic leadership and entrepreneurship literature can be fused together to further develop the analytical framework of this thesis.

In **Chapter Four**, the concept of authentic leadership is outlined and critiqued from a gender perspective, highlighting the need to acknowledge follower agency within the process. The lack of empirical studies is highlighted, before small businesses are positioned as an appropriate context to develop the field empirically. The analytical framework is then finalised with contributions from authentic leadership added drawing together understandings from the gender, women in leadership, female entrepreneurship and authentic leadership fields to inform the research approach and data analysis process of the thesis.

In **Chapter Five**, I introduce my ontological and epistemological standpoint, before outlining my research methodology, the methods selected and the sampling approach taken. The approach to data interpretation is discussed before the centrality of reflexivity is explained and the ethical considerations are highlighted.

In **Chapter Six** categories of follower expectations of entrepreneurial leadership are represented before the voices of the women entrepreneur leaders are introduced, representing categories of entrepreneurial leadership experiences. Through synthesis with the literature, categories of expectations and experiences begin to surface the gender complexities and tensions in the *doing* and *undoing* of gender.

In **Chapter Seven**, I synthesise my interpretations with extant literature explored within Chapters Two, Three and Four, to offer *some* discourses which shape the experiences and expectations of entrepreneurial leadership for women entrepreneur leaders and their followers respectively. The chapter contributes to understandings of how gender is experienced within the small business context during the process of entrepreneurial leadership.

In **Chapter Eight**, I revisit my research questions and objectives, first introduced in Chapter One, and outline original contributions to knowledge that this study offers to the gender, entrepreneurship and authentic leadership literature in understanding leader and follower perspectives of women entrepreneurial leadership in small businesses. Through my reflexive account of my research journey, I reflect upon my feminist approach in relation to my own position as a woman academic and my own experiences of gender, gendered and gendering. Furthermore, I highlight areas for further research in entrepreneurial leadership from a gendered perspective to build upon the approach and theoretical contribution of this thesis.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the reader with a background to the researcher to understand the selected area of study and the research question: *Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?* The context of female entrepreneurship in the UK was then outlined leading to a discussion highlighting gaps within extant entrepreneurial leadership, entrepreneurship and authentic leadership research. An overview of the key concepts of patriarchy, gender, agency and gender in organisations and leadership was presented before drawing together the concepts, research context and areas for contribution to understand the focus of the study. The research parameters, highlighting the research question, aims and objectives were outlined, before the research approach, concluding with an outline structure of the thesis in the form of chapter summaries.

Chapters Two, Three and Four follow providing a detailed critique of the key literature areas of gender, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership from a gender perspective to outline the theoretical framework which shapes this thesis.

Chapter Two

Envisioning Gender Anew: Moving Beyond the 'Other'

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of current gender and leadership research to progress the first research objective to; *'critically review the gender in leadership, entrepreneurship, authentic leadership literatures before merging the three theory bases through which women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership can be theorised'*. The chapter will also contribute to the second research objective to *'develop a gender lens, against a backcloth of patriarchy, to explore women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership to contribute new insights to studies of entrepreneurial leadership'*. The literature review and development of a theoretical gender lens in this chapter will be further constructed in Chapters Three and Four to progress the overall thesis question: *'Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?'*

Concepts of patriarchy and gender are considered to locate the position of this thesis within gender research, before extant work on the doing and undoing of gender in organisations is explored. The masculine construction of leadership within organisations is discussed, highlighting the strategies women draw upon to manage the double bind as they attempt to meet gender social role expectations and leader role expectations. Conceptual developments to disrupt masculine hierarchical superiority and gender structure are explored which enable moves beyond dualistic thinking within organisational research. The complexities and tensions in attempting to disrupt the gender binary are discussed before the development of the theoretical gender lens is considered and taken forward in Chapters Three and Four for further development.

2.2 Patriarchy and Gender within the Thesis

Entrepreneurship is a social phenomenon, yet the field has been dominated by positivist research approaches (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009) investigating *the* truth rather than exploring individual subjectivities within processes of entrepreneurial leadership.

Exploring the leadership experiences of women entrepreneurs, against a backcloth of patriarchy and gender lens, will provide social and cultural understandings which have remained relatively absent in both the leadership (Kelan, 2008) and entrepreneurship literature (Hurley, 1999; Steyaert, 2005; Ahl, 2006). Patriarchy is “an essential tool in the analysis of gender relations” (Walby, 1989: 213). The concept is outlined to provide a backcloth to the exploration of the leadership experiences of women entrepreneurs and their followers within the small business context.

2.2.1 Patriarchy

Patriarchy positions men as legitimate and natural figures of authority, enabling male supremacy at a societal and organisational level to flourish, allowing men to access and maintain positions of power and privilege (Simpson and Lewis, 2005). The understanding of patriarchy brought to this thesis is a “system of social structures, and practices” (Walby, 1989: 214) which creates and sustain a “pervasive cultural condition in which women’s lives [are] either misrepresented or not represented at all” (Butler, 1990: 1). ‘Woman’ as a social category is, therefore, subordinated to the social category of ‘man’ positioned as the norm and ‘One’, with women labelled as the non-norm and the ‘Other’ (Butler, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1953).

This societal order is reflected in organisational structures with women “discursively characterized as ‘lacking’ in relation to the characteristics required for the professional identity” (Katila and Merilainen, 1999: 165). This social system of masculine domination (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004) that permeates societal structures and institutions, determines who can access power and what is deemed legitimate knowledge (Nicolson, 1996).

The simultaneous power, influence and permeability of patriarchy is often incredibly difficult to comprehend. Katila and Merilainen (2002: 351) describe a way of understanding patriarchy as “a discourse that is everywhere and nowhere at the same time. It is not something you can permanently nail down but rather something that is constantly shifting”. This understanding of patriarchy provides a backcloth to everyday lives and consequently the backcloth to this research. Given this study is framed by the above understanding of patriarchy, it is important to acknowledge and discuss some of the concept’s criticisms and responses to highlight its appropriateness for this research.

Patriarchy has most commonly been employed as an explanatory device to understand gendered relations (Pollert, 1996; also see Walby, 1989). However, patriarchy has come under significant scrutiny for its ahistorical approach (Walby, 1989; Butler, 1990) which has “threatened to become a universalising concept that overrides or reduces distinct articulations of gender asymmetry in different cultural contexts” (Butler, 1990: 35). Walby (1989: 217) cautions against generalising women’s lives particularly in relation to ethnicity and social class, and draws upon the example of the family being a site of great “resistance and solidarity” for black women, but a site of oppression for white women. Walby (1989) calls for an understanding of patriarchy that is sufficiently flexible to capture the variation and inequalities between women. Consideration of this criticism is important in addressing the overall research question to ensure the epistemological approach taken in this thesis enables commonalities (Buzzanell, 2003) in experiences of gender to be recognised without denying diversity (Stanley and Wise, 1994).

This thesis also draws upon Connell and Messerschmidt’s (2005) critique of hegemonic masculinity which offers a reformulated understanding by considering geographies of masculinities at a local (face-to-face interaction), regional (culture or nation state) and global (transnational) level to highlight the importance of place and the connectedness between the levels. Their conceptualisation highlights that not every individual man is in a dominant position and not every woman is subordinated (Kaser, 2008). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) draw upon a concept of hybridisation which enables the reconfiguration of diverse elements to adapt to historical changes. For example heterosexual men have acquired certain elements of homosexual men’s styles and practices to create a new hybrid of gender practice (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). It is this generation of new hybrids which Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue blurs gender difference without undermining patriarchy. This understanding aligns with the understanding of individual agency within this thesis and how it is understood to relate to patriarchy.

As Thornley and Thörnqvist (2009) highlight, patriarchy is an important analytical category in understanding the concept as an endemic cultural condition (Nicolson, 1996; Butler, 1990). It is enmeshed within all social processes and extant gender and organisation theory base continue to draw upon, it therefore is appropriate for this research. Duncan (1996) contends that the nature of unequal relations is a major part of both men and women's life experiences and;

Without theorization of where gender inequalities come from, or how they are produced, maintained and changed, the research on gender will easily become a descriptive add-on to pre-existing gender blind theory. The real explanatory importance of gender will have escaped again.

(Duncan, 1996: 75)

Consequently, the understanding of patriarchy taken forward in this thesis is understood to be theoretical rather than descriptive, and therefore an aspect of social reality against which many social constructions are made and interpreted. A patriarchal backcloth therefore precedes individual choice and provides the background against which individuals may then have an active role (Linstead and Thomas, 2001). Individuals' agency, understood to be their independent behaviour and decisions to comply or resist gender norms (Martin, 2006).

The researcher, therefore, acknowledges that patriarchy provides a background to everyday lives, and consequently the backcloth to this study of how gender is experienced within entrepreneurial leadership as men and women learn to become leaders and entrepreneurs against the masculine backcloth of patriarchy (Bryans and Mavin, 2003). From its theoretical economic roots and media constructions, our understandings of who is deemed legitimate and credible as an entrepreneur has been shaped along gendered terms (Ahl, 2006, See Chapter 3 section 3.2.1 for further discussion). This understanding provides the backcloth which frames the understanding of gender drawn upon within this thesis, discussed in the section that follows.

2.2.2 Gender

West and Zimmerman's (1987) seminal work on doing gender highlighted that gender was something that people *do* in their everyday interactions with others (Messerschmidt, 2009). The understanding of gender which I bring to this thesis is socially constructed characteristics of masculinities and femininities (Fonow and Cook, 2005; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; Jackson and Scott, 2002; Lorber and Farrell, 1991; Butler, 1990), accomplished through interactions with others (Messerschmidt, 2009).

Gender is one of the most conventional and frequently applied categories of self-identification (Gherardi, 1996) and is often used synonymously with sex (Calas and Smirich, 1991). Gender understood not to be biologically determined (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000) but socially constructed (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; Jackson and Scott, 2002; Lorber and Farrell, 1991) and independent of sex (Delphy, 2002) which is understood to be "the anatomical and physiological characteristic which signifies biological maleness and femaleness" (Jackson and Scott, 2002: 9). It is dependent upon "genetic endowment and subsequent characteristics [which] depend upon hormone distribution prior to birth and at different stages of the life cycle" (Nicolson, 1996: 9). Although, there are biological differences between men and women's bodies which cannot be ignored (Messerschmidt, 2009), the biological dichotomy should not prescribe the social dichotomy (Delphy and Leonard, 1992) of gender.

As Butler (1990: 112) asserts:

it does not follow that to be a given sex is to become a given gender; in other words, 'woman' need not be the cultural construction of the female body, and 'man' need not interpret male bodies.

Consequently "one is not born but becomes a woman" (de Beauvoir, 1953: 295), which Butler (1990: 112) argues places the category of 'woman' as an "ongoing discursive practice". Individuals produce and reproduce gender in their everyday activities and interactions (Acker, 1992). Gender is a product of historic, social and cultural meanings (Jackson and Scott, 2002; Gherardi, 1994), not a fixed identity (Jeanes, 2007) or property of individuals (Gherardi, 1994). Nicolson (1996) suggests that the best way to understand gender is as a verb and a process that functions as a cultural organising principle (West and Zimmerman, 1987).

Masculinities and femininities “are products not of biology but of the social, cultural and psychological attributes acquired through the process of becoming a man or a woman in a particular society at a particular time” (Jackson and Scott, 2002: 9). Masculinities and femininities “offer an alternative to the variable-orientated fixation on ‘men’ and ‘women’ using the bodies as a firm criterion for classification” (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997: 82). Instead they are in constant “social flux” (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000: 146), they are “forms of subjectivities...that are present in all persons, men as well as women” (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997:85).

Masculinities are understood to be the “values, experiences and meanings that are culturally interpreted as masculine and typically feel ‘natural’ to or are ascribed to men more than women in the particular cultural context” (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997: 83). Descriptive characteristic of masculinities are “hard, dry, impersonal, objective, explicit, outer focused, action-orientated, analytical, dualistic, quantitative, linear, rationalist, reductionist and materialist” (Hines, 1992:328). Femininity is described in contrast, with the prioritisation of feelings, creativity and imagination (Hines, 1992), cooperation, interdependence, acceptance, emotion, (Marshall, 1993) nurturing, empathy and compassion (Grant, 1988). However, societal understandings of gender, which conflate gender with sex, tie masculinities and femininities to the bodies of men and women respectively.

Women are tied to the symbolic universe of femininity, within the private realm, where societal expectations of women rest with reproduction, silence and obedience (Gherardi, 1994). Men are tied to masculinities and the public realm, where social role expectations lie with production, command and voice (Gherardi, 1994) deemed appropriate for the organisational context and entrepreneurial and leadership effectiveness. The next section considers how this understanding of gender as a “variable-orientated fixation on men and women” (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997: 82) emerges within organisations.

2.2.3 Gender and Organisations

When organisational processes and practices embody the attributes most commonly associated with one sex over another, such process and practices are referred to as gendered as they “reflect and reinforce prevailing conceptions of masculinity and femininity” (Maier, 1999: 71). The gender social order is, therefore, sustained within institutional structures. The dominance of masculinity within organisations over time, has enabled masculine practice to become understood as normal practice stripping gender from the context and allowing masculinity to become invisible (Lewis, 2006; Simpson and Lewis, 2005) due to a patriarchal backcloth. Consequently, individuals are unable to identify their organisational experiences in relation to gender, (Acker, 1992) which enables the gendered nature to continue unchallenged.

Assumptions based on essentialist notions of women’s skills set, based upon their perceived domestic skills and experience perpetuates women’s role as caregivers and their second place within the social order (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000; Elliott and Stead, 2008). Consequently, women’s skills are devalued in terms of their significance and potential contribution within the organisational and leadership domain (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000). Due Billing and Alvesson (2000: 150) highlight:

the advantages of household and childcare experiences provides a mixed blessing in the reduction of gender equality as it draws upon, and in a sense celebrates, the placement of women in patriarchy, i.e. as primarily responsible for children and home.

For this thesis it was imperative to locate women’s socially perceived position as primary carers within the domestic sphere and as subordinates to men within organisations, as this provided an exploration for the gendered social role expectations placed upon women against a patriarchal backcloth enabling the study to explore the research question of how gender is experienced in entrepreneurial leadership in small firms.

2.2.4 Gender and Entrepreneurial Leadership

Feminist scholars draw upon gender as socially constructed (the social practices and representations associated with masculinity and femininity (Acker, 1992; Simpson and Lewis, 2005; Ahl, 2006)) and draw upon gender as an analytical lens to clearly differentiate this understanding from biological sex (male or female reproductive organs). However, within the female entrepreneurship literature and women in leadership literature, gender is still frequently drawn upon as a research variable denoting sex, tying masculinities to the bodies of men and femininities to the bodies of women.

In Ahl's (2006) feminist discourse analysis of 81 articles of female entrepreneurship published between 1982 and 2000, scholars continually used gender to denote sex rather than the social construction of masculinities and femininities. This significant conflation of gender with sex within research has led to and perpetuated understandings of masculinities and femininities being tied to the bodies of men and women respectively. Masculinity and femininity are, therefore, positioned as mutually exclusive (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000) and placed in binary opposition. The understanding of binaries within this thesis is considered in the next section.

2.2.5 Gender Binaries

Biological determinism of gender results in individuals' sex at birth shaping societal and organisational perceptions and expectations of women and men in relation to their assigned gender category, subsequently affecting their identities and future opportunities. Drawing upon the understanding of patriarchy (see section 2.2.1), the maintenance of biological difference between men and women helps to sustain patriarchal power whereby women are perceived to be naturally suited to domestic labour and men better to waged labour (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). This has resulted in the construction of a gender binary and maintenance of gendered understandings as attributes bestowed to one gender are implicitly denied to the other (Gherardi, 1994; Maier, 1999). Therefore, the category 'woman' has come to symbolise a common identity (Butler, 1990) for all women, as does the category of 'man', resulting in women and men becoming prisoners of gendered identities (Gherardi, 1996), denying diversity within and between the sexes (Stanley and Wise, 1993).

As with any binary, one category takes precedence over the other, therefore, men and masculinity are constructed as 'One' and women and femininity as second (de Beauvoir, 1953) becoming the 'Other' (Butler, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1953; Leonard, 2002).

Consequently, processes or behaviours outside the binary are defined and compared in relation to the masculine norm (Jeanes, 2007). The construction and perpetuation of a gender dualism restricts the "discursive limits of possibility" for women and men (Jeanes, 2007: 555; Borgerson and Rehn, 2004). It prohibits the understanding of gender subjectivities (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997) which allows both women and men to behave in socially perceived feminine and masculine ways.

Delphy and Leonard (1992) use the metaphor of a container to describe how society continues to use gender to differentiate between the biological differences of men and women (Jackson and Scott, 2002; Gherardi, 1994). Women and men become locked into their sex stereotyped label, polarising men and women in relation to masculinity and femininity respectively (Gherardi, 1994).

As previously highlighted, bodies should not prescribe gender classification (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997). Masculinities and femininities should be viewed as subjectivities that are open to both women and men (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997) enabling social flux as both sexes continuously enter the cross-gender spaces of masculinity and femininity as they occupy a dual presence (Gherardi, 1994). However, a more recent study by Messerschmidt (2009) argues that bodies and sex category should not be ignored as against a patriarchal backcloth they are drawn upon to determine socially acceptable behaviour of both women and men (this is discussed further in section 2.3).

Building upon the previous discussion of patriarchy, whereby the social order is understood to be reflected and reinforced through organisational structures (Maier, 1999), gendered understandings are perpetuated within the organisational context. Consequently, femininity is bound to the bodies of women, immediately marking women as the non-norm (Katila and Merilainen, 1999) by their very sex (Lewis, 2006). Within patriarchal and gendered understandings, women are denied the social flux to move between the symbolic spaces of gender to enable them to be perceived as successful within the entrepreneurship and leadership domain.

Women who do reach leadership positions within organisations are required to manage their dual presence within two dichotomous symbolic spheres of femininity, to satisfy their social role, and masculinity, to satisfy their leadership role (Gherardi, 1994). Their embodied and gender assigned difference results in women being perceived to hold the same “qualities in the workplace that have previously been located in the domestic sphere” (Katila and Merilainen, 1999: 166), silence, obedience and reproduction (Gherardi, 1994) which are not valued within the organisational context (Katila and Merilainen, 1999). It is under this premise that Eagly (2005) argues that women are denied the perceived leadership legitimacy within an organisational context.

Simpson and Lewis (2005) argue that studies that continue to conflate gender with sex should be abandoned as they reinforce the embodiment of masculinity and femininity to men and women respectively, sustaining a gendered social order which preserves male dominance. Simpson and Lewis (2005) and Lewis (2006) call for future studies to concentrate on exploring and disrupting gendered organisational practices by placing gender at the centre as a theoretical lens from which to analyse and question cultural notions of femininity and masculinity (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000). By doing so we can begin to provide further understandings of the ‘gender we do’ (Gherardi, 1994), explored within the next section.

2.3 (Un)Doing Gender

Following West and Zimmerman’s (1987) seminal work on doing gender there has been much research which has explored the concept of doing gender in organisations, with more recent debates outlining the concept of undoing gender (Jeanes, 2007; Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Both doing and undoing gender will be discussed in the sections that follow.

2.3.1 Doing Gender

Understanding ‘doing gender’ (West and Zimmerman, 1987) and the ‘gender we do’ (Gherardi, 1994) as social practices accomplished through actions and interactions with others has gained great pace since West and Zimmerman’s key article ‘*Doing Gender*’ (Martin, 2006; Czarniawska, 2006; Jeanes, 2007). West and Zimmerman (1987: 126) understand doing gender as “socially guided perceptual and interactional and micro political activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine”.

West and Zimmerman (1987: 125) conceptualise “gender as a routine accomplishment, embedded in everyday interaction...through psychological, cultural and social means”. Their central premise is that “gender is not something that we are, but something we do” (Deutsch, 2007: 106). The concept acknowledges that gender is not a possession of individuals (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) but recognises individuals’ agency (Messerschmidt, 2009), highlighting that, however unintentional, women may contribute to their own silencing (Smith, 2009).

Doing gender’s recognition of agency aligns with the key understanding of individual agency which I bring to this thesis, which acknowledges the active role of individuals (Linstead and Thomas, 2002), in relation to their ability to act, make decisions, struggle with, influence, accept or reject (Corker and Shakespeare, 2002) gender social role expectations against a patriarchal backcloth. It is important to this study to understand that people are not “passive victims” of structures (Leckenby and Hesse-Biber, 2007: 257); but that there are a myriad of factors which influence people’s decisions and behaviour, acknowledging individual subjectivities which aligns with the ontological and epistemological orientation of this thesis.

Gherardi (1994) highlights that the ‘gender we do’ across our private and public spaces either works to eradicate or emphasise inequalities between the sexes, to help us manage our ‘dual presence’ across symbolic universes of masculinity and femininity. Gherardi (1994) suggests that we engage in ‘ceremonial work’ to pay homage to the symbolic meaning of gender. Examples of ceremonial work could be a situation when a woman thanks a man for his DIY skills when fixing something or a man thanks a woman for her ‘woman’s intuition’ when advising him on gift ideas for his wife, illustrating how people emphasise differences between the sexes (Gherardi, 1994).

Gherardi (1994) contends that we engage in ‘remedial work’ to repair the inequality of symbolic order, for example how women manage and cope with the fact that they are not excluded from work like men are from child birth. Understanding Gherardi’s (1994) ceremonial and remedial work is important within the context of this study as it highlights how people are able to exercise individual agency in their decisions by either complying or resisting gender norms (Martin, 2006). Martin (2003, 2006) conceptualises doing gender as gender practices and practising to highlight how people conform or rebel against institutionalised gender norms, explored next.

2.3.1.1 Gender Practice and Practising

Martin (2006: 270) suggests that “roles, norms and ideals relative to gender can be viewed as gendering practices when they involve action – that is, when they are actively done, said or interpreted”.

Gendering practices include:

widely known and accepted forms of dress, demeanour, language, expressions, actions and interests that are culturally available to and normatively or stereotypically associated with one or the other gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987)

(Martin, 2006: 257)

Through gender practice (dress, behaviour, language, interests) people conform or rebel against institutionalised gender status (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010). However, such gender practices are “subtle, often instantaneous, often barely noticed or made a theme in conversation” (Connell, 2003: 370). Acknowledging such subtle gender practices highlights the invisibility of masculine hegemony against a patriarchal backcloth. Furthermore, it also emphasises the need to increase awareness of the ‘gender we think’ (Gherardi, 1994), in order to understand experiences of gender and to begin to challenge the current gender social order.

In conceptualising the ‘gender we think’, Gherardi (1994) highlights that gender goes beyond interactional behaviour to a deeper, trans-psychic level, informed by tacit knowledge below the level of consciousness. Therefore, although we are aware of our decisions and actions, we may not be aware of how gender is implicated (Martin, 2006) within them. Both Martin (2006) and Nencel (2010) assert “that much of how we construct gender...is done non-reflexively” (Nencel, 2010: 73), unless we have a gender consciousness (Martin, 2003).

Czarniawska’s (2006) study highlights that subtle forms of gender are invisible and, consequently, perceived as legitimate enabling individuals to “do gender unto the other...ascribing gender to people through discriminatory action” (Czarniawska, 2006: 234). Furthermore, such discriminatory action may be accepted by both the individuals to whom the discriminatory action is aimed and society more broadly, for example men and women using different toilets (Czarniawska, 2006).

Czarniawska (2006: 235) argues that discrimination cannot continue to hide behind other criteria for example “she lacks leadership qualities”. At this ‘deeper’ level of the ‘gender we think’ (Gherardi, 1994), our gendered assumptions must be surfaced, to articulate, highlight and challenge the more subtle forms of the gender we do (Martin, 2003; 2006) to understand how we continue to perpetuate gendered assumptions.

One example discussed by Martin (2006: 257) to illustrate gender practice is the “practice of referring to women who are in no sense ‘girls’ relative to age, as ‘girls’”. She contends that:

a man who refers to women at work as ‘girls’ enacts a practice made available to him by the institutionalized system of gender relations. He knows about the practice; he uses it correctly, relative to (some) norms of the gender order. Yet in using it he may communicate a message he does not intend. (On the other hand, he may intend it.) The social and cultural context in which the term is used will affect the way women interpret and react to it. For instance, they may accept it when a male friend calls them ‘girls’ at a dinner party but resent it if he does so at work. They may especially dislike it if their boss, man or woman, uses the term. The meanings people attach to gender are contextually dependent. Contexts influence workers’ intellectual and emotional responses to gendering practice; thus context as well as content must be addressed if gender’s resilience and influence at work is to be unmasked (Ferre, 2003; Ridgeway and Correll, 2004).

(Martin, 2006: 257)

Katila and Merilainen’s (1999) research draws upon the same example, referring to women as ‘girls’. Whilst it may be accepted in one social context as free spirited and playful, in an organisational setting it may be rejected as derogatory, with a perceived intent of undermining women’s credibility (Katila and Merilainen, 1999). Responses to such comments are often made unreflexively (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010) unless respondents have a gender consciousness (Martin, 2003). Nencel (2010) cautions scholars that the concept of doing gender exaggerates and implies a high degree of intentionality in women’s actions (Nencel, 2010).

What is required is greater consideration of “the shape, fluidity and dynamism of gender in practice” (Martin, 2006: 254; Martin, 2001) in order to understand the complexities and tensions of the ‘gender we do’ and the ‘gender we think’ (Gherardi, 1994) unreflexively within organisational contexts. Understanding the gender we think and the gender we do reflexively and non-reflexively is important to address the overall research question of how gender is experienced within entrepreneurial leadership in small firms to understand how gender is interpreted by women entrepreneurs and their followers.

Gender practices and practising within organisations are considered before an understanding of how gender can be undone is outlined.

2.3.1.2 Gender Practice and Practising within Organisations

Gender is infused in all interactions (Fletcher, 1999) and cannot be removed or detached from our everyday organisational lives (Martin, 2006). As Martin (2006: 255) asserts “even if people could leave gender at the door, gender would still be present because it was already there”. Consequently, masculine practices have become so deeply rooted within organisational culture (Martin, 2006) they have become “silent actions” (Czarniawska, 2006: 234), and accepted as mainstream and legitimate practices.

Acker (1998) argues that gendered sub-cultures underpin and permeate all organising within the workplace, reproducing gender division; maintaining male dominance and privilege (Acker, 1990), through the organisational processes and practices which “reflect and reinforce prevailing conceptions of masculinity” (Maier, 1999: 71). Consequently, women are marginalised and disadvantaged (Martin, 2006) as attributes most commonly associated with women are not valued or embedded within organisational processes and practices. Therefore, to suggest that organisations are gender neutral masks understandings of everyday organisational realities (Acker, 1998) of the symbolic order of gender (Gherardi, 1994).

People in organisations ‘do gender’ by placing men and women in opposing positions (Gherardi, 1996) maintaining the gender binary and social order as men’s bodies are tied to masculinities, power and privilege (Simpson and Lewis, 2005). Consequently, women’s lack of accession to leadership positions are individualised behind another criteria, i.e. “she lacks” (Czarniawska, 2006: 235) rather than being perceived as a gendered issue. Masculinisation of mainstream practices has become ‘malestream’ making it difficult to detect gendering or gendered natures unless we remain reflexively vigilant.

Martin (2006) argues that a distinction between gender practice and gender practising must be highlighted and made visible in order to challenge and enable change. She differentiates between the two in her understanding of gender practices as cultural resources available to 'do gender' through words, deeds and interpretations. Martin (2006) delineates gender practising in the literal sense of gender constituted through interaction i.e. in the saying, doing and interpreting. It is essentially gender "practice in action" (Martin, 2006: 259). Martin (2006) contends that in making a distinction between gender practices and gender practising the fluidity of gender is highlighted.

Practising "is done in real time and space" (Martin, 2006: 258) once it has been done it cannot be retracted. An example of gender practise outlined by Martin (2006: 258) is when a man comments on a woman's "pretty dress":

she may respond with a smile or frown, a 'thank you,' 'colourful tie' or whatever. She is unlikely to reflect on his comment before responding. Yet his comment impels a response that will be shaped by the setting, her relationship with him – formal or informal – how she interprets his intent – friendly, hostile, sincere, smart-alecky or flirtatious. The immediacy of interaction means that the woman's response is unlikely to be premised in thoughtful reflection (Bourdieu, [1980] 1990).

(Martin, 2006: 258)

2.3.1.3 Intentionality of Gender Practice and Practising within Organisations

Martin (2006) challenges the claim that gender practise is always intentional and argues that gender practising is often more emergent in nature. Drawing on the example above of a man commenting on a woman's "pretty dress", this practise is done in real time, therefore, the immediacy and speed at which actions and responses are made, makes retraction impossible and indicates that not all practising is intentional (Martin, 2006). Intention suggests that one has a rationale or purpose, implying reflexive engagement (Martin, 2006; 2003). Reflexivity is not a process that is sustained at all times but engaged with at particular points in time. For example, we consciously make a decision about our choice of clothes in the morning – a gender practice – however, we do not remain reflexive about the messages that this sends throughout the day, neither, for example are we reflexive about whether to smile to a passerby (Martin, 2006).

Although, gender practices and practising are frequently used, they are emergent and reproduced in different ways (Martin, 2006). It is important to understand gender practice and practising as fluid, with interpreted meaning and consequent action as temporal, culturally and socially dependent. Martin (2006) is aligned with Czarniawska (2006) in her argument that gender practice is non reflexive, however, Martin (2006) goes further to introduce gender practising to create a “twin dynamic” of non-reflexivity (Martin, 2006: 257) .

Martin (2006) contends that such non-reflexivity of gender practice and practising draws attention to the ways in which doing gender can be harmful for women in relation to felt exclusion, exhaustion and being cast as different. People “do not simply think about such things; they do them” (Martin, 2006: 259), consequently people are often not fully aware of the gender in their action.

Within the organisational setting both men and women in positions of power routinely practise gender without being reflexive and are therefore unaware of the harm ensuing from their non-reflexive or unintentional practising of gender (Martin, 2006). Through discussion and debate, this thesis facilitates political action by raising awareness and challenging people’s previously unquestioned gender practice and/or practising.

Martin (2006: 259) delineates that “to appreciate the practising of gender at work requires acceptance of the premise that people actively practise gender in varying ways” which she argues demonstrates agency. She asserts that people either adhere to or resist prevailing norms, returning to Gherardi’s (1994) understandings of ceremonial (paying homage to the symbolic meaning of gender) and remedial work (to repair the inequality of the symbolic order) as discussed above. It is this acceptance of agency in ‘doing gender’ which Deutsch (2007) suggests is the most important contribution, yet it has been utilised to demonstrate the maintenance of gender relations.

Deutsch (2007: 108) suggests that doing gender has become “a theory of conformity and gender conventionality” and further asserts that with West and Zimmerman’s (1987) understanding, even when an individual contravenes their sex role stereotype, they are still doing gender. Consequently, it becomes difficult to understand how gender inequality can ever be destabilised. The concept of undoing gender is explored next as an approach to think differently regarding gender practice and practising.

2.3.2 Undoing Gender

The concept of undoing gender provides an alternate understanding to doing gender, characterised by the resistance or subversion of gender norms, leading to individuals' behaviour being perceived to be less credible (Jeanes, 2007).

Jeanes' (2007) study offers an illustrative example of undoing gender by a woman claimant at an employment tribunal as she takes the decision to represent herself during the case. Throughout the tribunal the woman claimant demonstrates confidence, assertiveness, and aggression, deemed to be acceptable and appropriate masculine behaviour for the situation. However, this masculine behaviour is incongruent with her socially perceived sex category (Jeanes, 2007) and jolts our assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) of what we deem to be legitimate behaviour for a woman victim of sex discrimination. As Jeanes (2007: 562) contends, the woman fails "to conform to the normative gendered victim – she wasn't doing feminine (vulnerable/submissive) and thus wasn't authentic as a woman incapable of defending herself" – undoing gender. Consequently her "failure to perform submissive victim, and her emotional doing were ultimately her undoing in more than a gendered sense" (Jeanes, 2007: 567) as she lacked a gender authenticity.

Jeanes' (2007) study begins to highlight the importance of sex category within studies of gender, which has been further built upon by Messerschmidt (2009) and Mavin and Grandy (2010).

2.3.2.1 Importance of Sex Category

Messerschmidt (2009) criticises extant developments of doing and undoing gender for overlooking the importance of 'sex category'. He argues that sex category is an explicit element of doing and undoing gender as the congruence society attributes to sex and gender has resulted in the categories becoming "indistinguishable" (Messerschmidt, 2009: 86). He states that:

we see 'sex' and 'gender' as an inseparable, seamless whole, and this is why incongruency produces a cognitive dissonance in us – for which masculine girls (and feminine boys) often get punished.

(Messerschmidt, 2009: 86)

Messerschmidt's (2009) contention that a balance between perceived sex category and gender behaviour is necessary for masculinities and femininities to be perceived by others as valid and credible, supports Jeanes' (2007) finding of the woman claimant lacking credibility.

Messerschmidt (2009) highlights the importance of sex category and gender behaviour in his research exploring how teenage youths construct an easily identifiable sex category, but perform gender behaviour which is perceived by others to be incongruent with their sex category. For example, a girl who wears "loose fitting 'boyish' clothing that de-emphasized breasts, waist and legs...to facilitate the erasing of both femaleness and femininity" (Messerschmidt, 2009: 87) creates incongruity with her socially perceived female body (Messerschmidt, 2009).

Risman (2009) argues that such non-traditional behaviours espoused by girls (and boys) should not be labelled as 'alternative' masculinities or femininities respectively, based merely on biological maleness and femaleness. Rather, when for example a girl adopts behaviours perceived to be masculine we should be open to:

discuss the new world they inhabit and how they are making their lives within it rather than inventing a label for a kind of femininity that includes the traits and behaviours previously restricted to boys and men

(Risman, 2009: 82).

This study, therefore, takes forward Jeanes (2007) and Messerschmidt's (2009) contention that the body cannot be ignored when considering gender as it is enmeshed in the doing and undoing of gender.

2.3.2.2 Unsettling the Gender Binary

More recently Kelan (2010) has criticised extant developments of doing and undoing gender for perpetuating the gender binary. She argues that research has continued to map or map differently the gender binary, failing to disrupt or challenge the given (Kelan, 2010).

Mavin and Grandy (2010) respond to Kelan's (2010) analysis in their research on exotic dancers, suggesting that doing gender differently through multiple enactments of masculinity and femininity, offer new possibilities for unsettling and potentially disrupting gender binaries over time. Women may 'do gender well' whilst simultaneously doing gender differently which goes against both their perceived sex category and expected gender behaviour (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Mavin and Grandy (2010) offer the concept of 'doing gender well' as a way for individuals to gain congruence between their socially perceived sex category and their gender behaviour. For example, for a woman to do gender well, she must perform feminine behaviour through a socially perceived woman's body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). However, Mavin and Grandy (2010) argue that women (and men) doing gender well whilst also doing gender differently opens up the possibility for gender binaries to become unsettled overtime.

Risman (2009) asserts that gender research would be enhanced further with a greater focus on the 'undoing of gender' within an organisational context. Messerschmidt (2009) suggests that future research should analyse more closely:

(1) the relationship between perceived sex category and the meaning of situationally practised gender behaviour, (2) how both sex category and gender behaviour are socially constructed in and through the body, (3) whether doing gender may or may not be consciously intended as a masculine or feminine act, (4) how individuals may both 'do' and 'undo' gender, and (5) the important relationship between social action and social structure

(Messerschmidt, 2009: 88)

Given the above discussion of (un)doing gender, this thesis acknowledges that gender is not something we are, but something we do (Deutsch, 2007). It recognises individuals' agency (Messerschmidt, 2009) through the gender we practice and practise (Martin, 2006) in relation to how people conform or rebel against institutionalised gender status (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010). However, as Nencel (2010) highlights, the concept of doing gender suggests a high level of intentionality and conformity (Deutsch, 2007).

Consequently, greater consideration of the subtlety of gender (Martin, 2006) and alternative understanding of doing gender – undoing gender – can provide further insights into how individuals resist or subvert gender norms rather than continuing to subscribe to a theory of gender conventionality (Deutsch, 2007).

By drawing upon Mavin and Grandy's (2010) understanding of doing gender differently which acknowledges simultaneous and multiple enactments of masculinities and femininities the theoretical potential for unsettling the gender binary is possible and avoids Kelan's (2010) concern of remapping the gender binary. Mavin and Grandy's (2010) understanding acknowledges the fluid and complex nature of gender (Martin, 2001; 2006) as well as aligning with Messerschmidt's (2009) emphasis on the importance of sex category being enmeshed in the (un)doing of gender. The understanding of this thesis therefore acknowledges that sex category is essential within the interpretation of the (un)doing of gender as behaviour is deemed appropriate by others dependent upon the body through which it is performed (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

2.4 Masculine Constructions of Leadership: Women as the 'Other' Leader

Given the patriarchal backcloth and the gender lens drawn upon in this study (see sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2), the chapter moves to discuss the gendered nature of leadership within organisations to address the overall research question, 'leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: How is gender experienced in small firms?'

Through the gender lens, this thesis understands leadership to be a relational, social process which influences behaviour of both leaders and followers through their emerging relationships and interactions (Chia, 1995) recognising involvement and individual agency of both leaders and followers. Leadership is, therefore, a complex and reciprocal process, infused by gender, which cannot be reduced to the individual actions or behaviours (Hosking and Morley, 1991) of leaders and followers.

This section explores leadership and social role expectations, gendered evaluations of leadership performance, gender stereotypes and gender congeniality to provide an understanding of the masculine construction of leadership which positions women as the 'Other' leader.

2.4.1 Leadership and Social Role Expectations

Leadership has been historically and culturally shaped by the symbolic universe of masculinity (Schnurr, 2008; Eagly and Carli, 2003, 2007; Eagly, 2007; Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000; Sinclair, 1998).

This has been sustained through developments within the field constructed by men, from male experiences (Elliott and Stead, 2008; Kelan, 2008; Ferrario, 1991). Masculinity and leadership have become so deeply intertwined that the language of leadership and language of masculinity have become synonymous (Schnurr, 2008). Discourses of leadership have, therefore, reinforced male suitability and effectiveness, normalising masculinity and men (Calas and Smircich, 1996), working within the bounds of the symbolic universe of meaning (Schnurr, 2008) making it difficult to separate leadership and men (Eagly and Carli, 2007).

Organisations have become 'malestream' as structures and acceptable behaviour are born from masculine understandings reflected in financial performance related goals, which are based upon a premise of rationality devoid of intimacy (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Therefore, everything deemed to be non-masculine (i.e. femininity) is placed at the margins of the organisational domain and labelled 'Other', positioning femininity and females as ineffective and unsuitable for leadership roles (Schnurr, 2008) serving to further reinforce the gender binary.

Eagly (1987) and more recently Eagly *et al.*, (2000) offer social role theory to explain the gendered understanding of the social role expectations placed upon women and men, which determine what is appropriate gender behaviours for an individual's sex category (Eagly and Karau, 2002) within and outside the leadership domain.

Social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) is constructed upon the patriarchal understanding that men and women behave differently and adopt different roles which "reflect the sexual division of labour and gender hierarchy of society" (Eagly *et al.*, 2000: 124). Societal norms position men as breadwinners within paid labour and women as homemakers (Eagly *et al.*, 2000). Thus highlighting the significance of Walby's (1989) three structures of patriarchy discussed previously (see Section 2.2.1): patriarchal mode of production; patriarchal relations in paid labour and patriarchal state, drawn upon within this thesis to understand male domination within the organisational context. Women are aligned with domestic/unpaid labour associated with femininity and still take primary responsibility for family life (Eagly and Carli, 2007).

Leadership is not synonymous with family life as its demands prohibit career progression and reduce women's earning power, leaving women with less time for out of hours socialising, networking and corporate entertaining demanded by senior roles. This gendered understanding was evident within Kumra and Vinnicombe's (2008) study identifying whether the promotion to partner process within professional services was sex biased. The study found that women were deprived of opportunities due to existing male partners' gendered assumptions that women's husbands would be unwilling to relocate (Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2008). Kumra and Vinnicombe's (2008) study highlights women's hierarchical position as second and 'Other' against a patriarchal backcloth as their domestic role as a wife is highlighted as a key factor in career progression decisions.

Given the understanding that leadership is grounded within a patriarchal backcloth, and constructed upon masculine terms, men are positioned as legitimate leaders as their expected gender behaviour (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) and socially perceived sex category are congruent (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010). When women enter the symbolic space of leadership, their socially perceived sex category is incongruent with the gender behaviour expected within the leadership process. They are, therefore, cast as 'intruders' in male territories (Gherardi, 1996), denying women the power and resources of the patriarchal state (Walby, 1989) as they are perceived to be illegitimate and less credible leaders. Such gendered understandings have had an adverse effect on the number of women entering leadership positions (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000). Women, therefore, remain an underrepresented group within the upper echelons of organisations in both public and private sectors which Elliott and Stead (2008) assert requires further empirical research to understand women's experiences and practices of leadership.

This study acknowledges Elliott and Stead's (2008) need for further empirical work which explores leadership practices of women, but most importantly it recognises the need to explore experiences of gender from a small firm perspective. Mainstream leadership studies have historically focused upon large private sector organisations (Curran and Blackburn, 2001) with little attention given to entrepreneurs as leaders (Jensen and Luthans, 2006) particularly in a small firm context. Understanding women's experiences of doing and undoing gender in relation to their social role and leadership role expectations will support the overall research question of how gender is experienced in small firms?

Given the patriarchal backcloth of this study and that leadership is understood to be a relational, social process involving both leaders and followers, it is important to consider gendered evaluations of leadership performance in the section that follows.

2.4.2 Gendered Evaluations of Leadership Performance

Eagly and Carli (2007, 2008) offer a leadership framework of agentic and communal behaviour (see table 2.4.2) which highlights people's gendered evaluations of leadership performance (Mavin, 2009b) in relation to leadership role expectations for women and men.

Agentic	Communal
Aggressive	Supportive
Determined	Interpersonal
Competitive	Empathetic
Driven	Friendly
Ambitious	Sensitive
Tough	Compassionate
Independent	Kind
Task focused	Helpful
Political	Gentle
Controlled	Affectionate
Self reliant	Sympathetic

Table 2.4.2 Agentic and Communal Behaviours adapted from Eagly, A. and Carli, L. (2007) "Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership", *Harvard Business Review*, 85(9) pp: 62-71.

Eagly and Carli (2007) contend that agentic behaviour e.g. aggression, competitiveness, control and task focus, are congenial to men (Eagly and Carli, 2008; Mavin, 2009a, 2009b; Singh *et al.*, 2002), whilst women are associated with communal behaviour portrayed through concern for others; affectionate, friendly and compassionate behaviour (Eagly and Carli, 2008; Mavin, 2009a, 2009b; Singh *et al.*, 2002).

Both women and men are sex-role stereotyped; women to communal behaviours and men to agentic behaviours. Agentic leadership behaviours are portrayed positively when performed by men, but when performed by women our assumptions are challenged as their gender behaviour is incongruent with their perceived sex category (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010), leading to negative behavioural perceptions (Schnurr, 2008; Mavin, 2009a, 2009b).

As Mavin (2009b) elicits from her analysis of Eagly and Carli's (2007, 2008) framework of gendered leadership, gender permeates into job role expectations and consequently sex-role stereotypes are triggered. Agentic qualities and behaviours are associated with effective leadership, masculinity, and are therefore equated with men; while communal qualities and behaviours are not valued as effective leadership qualities, therefore, are associated with non-leadership, femininity and sex role stereotyped to women.

Organisational structures, therefore, support wider understandings of the gender social order, enabling masculine hierarchical superiority to flourish (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) within the leadership domain (Schnurr, 2008). Consequently, the alignment of perceived effective leadership behaviours and characteristics of masculine behaviour have led to positive assessments of men against such criteria (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Powell *et al.*, 2008), normalising men as legitimate leaders.

In Kumra and Vinnicombe's (2008: 71) study identifying the partner promotion process in professional services, they asserted that "people who [were] made partners [were] those who look like existing partners, a predominantly male group". Their study also highlighted women's discomfort with career enhancing strategies such as networking and self promotion (Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2008). Given the understanding of social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) and doing and undoing of gender in this thesis, the discomfort that the women felt in Kumra and Vinnicombe's (2008) study could be attributed to the incongruence between the required gender behaviour for such strategies and their socially perceived sex category (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Such incongruence between gender behaviour and sex category, creates a jolt in assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) as other people interpret their behaviour against a patriarchal backcloth of how women should behave.

Confident, assertive, domineering and pushy behaviours (Singh *et al.*, 2002; Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2008) do not fit with stereotypical understandings of women and make us feel very uncomfortable (Mavin, 2009b). Women are, therefore, evaluated negatively (Singh *et al.*, 2002), labelled bitches, battle axes (Mavin, 2009a), increasing their visibility (Simpson and Lewis, 2005) further as they are marked as different. Mavin (2009b) suggests that this gendered labelling of women that behave in masculine ways re-categorises women who challenge the established gendered social order, resisting their attempts to join men at the top of the gender hierarchy and emphasising their deviance.

Eagly and Carli (2007: 67) highlight the difficulty for women “to pull off such a transformation while maintaining a sense of authenticity as a leader”. This understanding assumes that women feel comfortable and natural to behave in feminine, communal ways, perpetuating essentialist notions of women and men, disregarding the understanding of gender in this thesis as subjectivities in social flux (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997; Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000).

Whilst it may be difficult for *some* women to remain authentic when doing masculine agentic gender behaviour, it may not be as transformative for other women. For some women behaving in a masculine way requires a behavioural shift, for others behaving in a masculine way is comfortable (Mavin, 2009a) and highlights more about others’ interpretations of those behaviours within our understandings of the established social order. However, this crossing of the symbolic space of gender could potentially marginalise women further, and cast them as an ‘outgroup’ member (Powell *et al.*, 2008) as they are perceived by others to illegitimately occupy masculine space within patriarchal understanding.

Within the rules of the gender binary, the required maleness, signifies the lack of femaleness, therefore, women are conversely assessed (Hearn, 1994; Mavin, 2009a) and perceived to be less suitable leadership candidates by others (Mavin, 2009a) as the masculine ethic is utilised as an exclusionary principle (Kanter, 1977).

2.4.3 Gender Stereotypes

As highlighted in the above section, socio-cultural understandings of appropriate gender behaviour for women and men have extended into organisations, shaping job role expectations, resulting in automatic recognition of gender stereotypes within organisations (Powell *et al.*, 2008).

A stereotype provides a typical picture of social groups and does not treat people as individuals but as part of a constructed group (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). Gender stereotypes place expectations that men behave in masculine ways and women behave in feminine ways for example believing “that only certain jobs or behaviours are appropriate for one’s sex and that others are sex-inconsistent” (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997:75). Alvesson and Due Billing (1997: 142) caution that stereotypes “exaggerate and thus sometimes distort, prevent nuances and lead to misleading generalizations”. They further contend that “if people were totally fused with their roles there would be no discussions of gender division of labour; it would be a given by nature” (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997: 77-78).

Whilst, Powell *et al.*, (2008) have noted some stereotype shifts, this has not caused a significant shift to move beyond dualist thinking. Consequently, Eagly and Carli (2007) argue these linear associations for agentic and communal behaviours remain and provide the foundation from which gendered leadership stereotypes are developed and drawn upon by people to evaluate effective leadership performance.

Agentic behaviours dominate organisational hierarchies and communal behaviours remain undervalued (Mavin, 2009a). Even women who behave in an agentic way and succeed in their leadership role, find their competence and performance questioned and devalued (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Bligh and Kohles’ (2008) research of political candidates illustrates this complexity, as the women in their study are expected to live up to stereotypical expectations of being a political leader and a woman. Political candidates are expected to engage in self-promoting activities to increase public opinions of competence. In satisfying their political role, they risk social rejection and likeability (Bligh and Kohles, 2008) as their gender behaviour is incongruent to their socially perceived sex category. Women political candidates, therefore, must contend with the need to satisfy voters that they are masculine enough to convey the appropriate political strengths and not too feminine to ensure the political strengths are sustained without losing their identity as a woman (Bligh and Kohles, 2008).

It is through simultaneously doing gender well and doing gender differently that Mavin and Grandy (2010) contend creates the possibility to unsettle the gender binary. Despite women politicians displaying agentic behaviours deemed appropriate for their political leader role, voters interpret the behaviour through their socially perceived sex category (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Women political candidates' agentic behaviour, therefore, jolts voters gendered assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) as men and women candidates are evaluated and labelled in accordance with their gender behaviour and socially perceived sex category (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

The discussion now moves to discuss how achieving a fit between gender and leadership roles is drawn upon as a strategy of increasing women's entry into leadership roles.

2.4.4 Gender Congeniality

Gender congeniality (Eagly and Johnson, 1990), the "fit between gender roles and particular leadership roles" (Eagly *et al.*, 1995: 129), is drawn upon to firstly understand women's lack of accession to senior positions and, secondly, as a way of encouraging women's entry into leadership roles by attempting to manage the dual presence by gaining congruency between gender social role expectations and occupational leadership roles. Under this premise, Eagly and Johnson (1990) illustrate such gender and occupational congruence offering the following examples; a military environment would be more suited to men, and that a leadership role within nursing would be an appropriate fit to women.

Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) found in their audit assessing the typical sectors in which women working within the professional services sector were allocated assignments perpetuated gender congeniality (Eagly and Johnson, 1990). They highlighted that women were typically allocated assignments in non-profit, retail and healthcare sectors and men in manufacturing, finance and mergers (Kumra and Vinnicombe, 2008).

Job roles which are congenial to women, aligned with femininity and those congenial to men, aligned with masculinity, cause less conflict as there is congruence between their gender behaviour, socially perceived sex category and job role.

However, consistently placing women within job roles congenial to femininity and stereotypically drawn from communal behaviours, women become positioned as the “social workers of management” (Ferrario, 1991: 19) ensuring women are kept out of key decision making roles and reinforcing the symbolic meaning of gender. Whilst this is helpful to understand the appropriate behaviours for each role, this theory reproduces gendered stereotypical understandings of men and women. It continues to perpetuate masculinities and femininities as biologically determined, rather than in constant social flux (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000), therefore, working within the given gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b) rather than attempting to disrupt the social order (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004).

The women in leadership field needs to move beyond the many sex comparison studies measuring differences (e.g. Rosener, 1990; Ferrario, 1991; Kabacoff, 1998; Gardiner and Tiggemann, 1999; Valentine and Godkin, 2000; Pounder and Coleman, 2002; Oshagbemi and Gill, 2003) and studies that accentuate gender difference in their findings (Bass, 1990; Bass and Stogdill, 1990; Vinnicombe and Cames, 1998; Burke and Collins, 2001) as they serve only to reinforce popular gender stereotypes (Ferrario, 1991) as masculinities became the measure from which other categories were evaluated (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000). Whilst comparative studies continue, men will always be favoured over women under such evaluation (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Powell *et al.*, 2008).

Women’s abilities are deemed to be less valuable, competent and less suitable for leadership (Ferrario, 1991; Eagly and Karau, 2002; Powell *et al.*, 2008; Mavin, 2009a), despite there being few, if any, differences between the personalities and behaviours of women and men (Grant, 1988). Effective leadership requires a combination for both relational and task concerns (Ferrario, 1991) but sex comparison studies serve to maintain masculinity’s hierarchical superiority (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Women’s leadership is, therefore, deemed to be something ‘Other’ than leadership (Schnurr, 2008) precluding their accession into more senior roles (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000) regardless of the fact that women and men are able to demonstrate agentic and communal behaviours.

This section has discussed how women are faced with the 'double bind' (Gherardi, 1994; Eagly and Carli, 2007) as they have the dilemma of behaving in perceived communal ways to satisfy their gender social role expectations of being women whilst behaving agentially to be perceived as a legitimate leader. Within our binary frame of reference, women leaders either challenge our gendered assumptions by behaving in an agentic way to meet leadership expectations and are labelled 'bitches', or they conform to the gender social role expectations of being a woman and behave in a communal way but fail to live up to leadership expectations and are, therefore, labelled ineffective and 'babed' (Mavin, 2009a, 2009b). These derogatory labels 'babes' and 'bitches' illustrate the lack of gender fluidity (Bryans and Mavin, 2003) and create another binary from which to reference women's behaviour, as they fail to simultaneously satisfy the social role expectations of being a leader and a woman and, therefore, deviate from the norm (Schnurr, 2008).

In order to satisfy both social role expectations, women are required to occupy both symbolic spaces, but within binary thinking they are prohibited from this dual presence (Gherardi, 1994) and consequently fail to live up to the prevailing gender stereotypes of women and leaders. The richness and complexity of our lives, encourage us to cross symbolic borders to enable us to acknowledge equality without denying diversity (Gherardi, 1994). The double bind presents women leaders with the challenge of wrestling with meeting extreme expectations in binary opposition in order to develop a style that balances their expected gender behaviour through a woman's body and effective leadership behaviours (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Schnurr, 2008). To sacrifice either communal or agentic behaviours, women risk being perceived as unfeminine or ineffective leaders (Schnurr, 2008).

Mindful of the social role incongruity (Eagly and Karau, 2002) women are faced with, the next section explores the strategies women have drawn upon to manage their dual presence.

2.5 Managing the Double Bind

As discussed above, leadership is framed by a patriarchal backcloth that sustains the gender binary and, therefore, masculine hegemony (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Women entering the leadership domain are, therefore, faced with the double bind of meeting gender social role expectations or leadership role expectations, as their dual presence is prohibited (Gherardi, 1994) by the lack of gender fluidity (Bryans and Mavin, 2003).

Extant research contends that women have complied with or competed against masculine leadership norms (Patterson and Mavin, 2009), working to either eradicate and play the male game (see Section 2.5.1), or emphasise their difference and move towards a feminine form of leadership (see Section 2.5.2) (Hekman, 1997; Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000; Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Exploring approaches, which eradicate or emphasise women's perceived difference within the extant women in leadership theory base, is relevant to begin to address the overall research question of this study which seeks to understand how gender is experienced within entrepreneurial leadership in small firms.

2.5.1 Working within the Gender Binary

The sections that follow explore "how women position themselves with respect to the dominant discourse" (Katila and Merilainen; 1999: 166) of masculine leadership within organisations.

2.5.1.1 Playing Down Gender

As Schnurr (2008), Eagly and Carli (2003) and Sinclair, (1998) highlight women have struggled to gain entry and participate legitimately within the masculine domain of leadership. One strategy women have adopted in order to gain entry into the higher echelons of the organisation, and be perceived as credible, is to eradicate their perceived difference (Hekman, 1997; Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) and learn to play the rules of the 'male game' (Katila and Merilainen, 1999).

Knights and Kerfoot (2004) highlight that working within the bounds of the established binary has proved to be successful for some women, as women who have ascended to leadership positions have tended not to align themselves with feminine orientations (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000).

Jorgenson's (2002) study of women engineers highlights women's denial of gender, as they attempt to "blend with a gender status quo" (Jorgenson, 2002: 352) in order to "overcome division and construct 'belonging'" (Olsson and Walker, 2004: 247). Olsson and Walker's (2004) later study exploring senior women executives positioning of self within corporate masculinity and female identity, also highlight how women down play gender. The women in both studies understand that their perceived success, credibility and respect (Jorgenson, 2002; Olsson and Walker, 2004) is reliant upon their ability to demonstrate agentic and associated masculine behaviours (Höpfl and Matila, 2007).

However, as previously highlighted agentic masculine behaviour is already a comfortable state of being for some women (Mavin 2009a), and behaving agentially is not a conscious decision that requires a behavioural shift. For other women agentic behaviour is not as comfortable, therefore, they learn to 'fit in' with male norms (Bryans and Mavin, 2003) as they consciously "develop behaviours and styles congruent with their peers" (Mavin, 2006a: 267) in an attempt to gain social role acceptance as leaders.

In Bligh and Kohles' (2008) most recent study of female US politicians, they highlight that women candidates purposefully work to portray an image that breaks from traditional gender stereotypes because of their realisation that masculinities are held in higher esteem for higher ranks in office. Much of the extant women in leadership research focus either on women who are required to make a behavioural shift to agentic behaviour to be accepted as a credible leader, or make the gendered assumption that *all* women do not behave agentially and that they *all* must consciously work to suppress their femininity. Ironically, such gender based studies serve simply to maintain the gender hierarchy as its central premise is based upon gendered assumptions. Remaining cognisant of this point is important for this thesis to ensure that throughout the data design, collection, analysis and writing, this research does not make such an essentialist assumption.

Whilst the importance of demonstrating socially acceptable leadership behaviours is crucial for women to gain credibility and legitimacy within their leadership role, there is an additional purpose for women adopting this strategy – 'keeping gender out' (Czarniawska, 2006; Lewis, 2006). Although the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) in the UK has supported women through overt cases of discrimination, Kantola (2008) highlights that legislation does not deal with more hidden forms of discrimination, which if women raise are deemed to bring gender into a gender neutral organisational context.

Due to their embedded nature, hidden forms of discrimination are often perceived to be harmless practices and behaviours, creating further obstacles for the women subjected to such discrimination to prove (Kantola, 2008) and gain understanding from others of the gendered nature of organisations. The introduction of legislation has resulted in organisations and people within them believing that issues of sex inequalities have been solved (Kantola, 2008). Consequently, when women make visible previously hidden forms of discrimination they are deemed to be bringing gender into organisations (Lewis, 2006). Therefore, highlighting its gendered nature casts women further to the margins and results in them being labelled as 'difficult', 'whinging' and 'troublesome', creating further barriers that could potentially be socially and emotionally demanding (Kantola, 2008).

Reflecting upon this danger, it is, therefore, unsurprising that women overlook discrimination (overt and hidden) and attribute their failure to attain senior leadership positions to personal failings, blaming themselves e.g. for not being proactive or for poor network relationships (Kantola, 2008; Kelan, 2008). It is easier to blame themselves and portray an image of sex equality than challenge embedded social and organisational structures and practices. Another strategy, which denies gender inequality, is individualism which is discussed in the next section.

2.5.1.2 Individualism

Individualism is understood within this thesis to be individuals' free choice and control over both their personal and professional lives (Kelan, 2008). Kelan (2008: 435) argues that the "traditional parameters which influenced biographies are ending and individuals are now free (or forced) to make decisions about their life course". Individualism suggests that people have opportunities for both success and failure open to them which cannot be attributed to "collectively experienced barriers" (Kelan, 2008:435). This understanding of individualism, therefore, refutes claims of gender inequality through the individualisation of experiences rendering gender invisible as barriers are neither discussed nor reduced (Kelan, 2008). It is important to this study to explore and understand how some experiences of gender may become hidden when answering the overall research question which guides this thesis 'leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how gender is experienced in small firms?'.

Kelan (2008) highlights in her discussion of the discursive construction of gender in contemporary management research that the discourse of individualism is a rebranding of the former discriminatory discourse. The gendered nature of organisations that preclude women's entrance and social role acceptance in leadership roles is, therefore, masked (Kelan, 2008) conveying a false image of equality where women have equal membership with men (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Kelan (2008) argues that whilst on the surface the discourse of individualism appears progressive, it is problematic. Women lack a voice (Simpson and Lewis, 2005) to highlight any form of discrimination and it fails to challenge normalised conceptions of leadership, therefore, organisations remain gendered and enable hidden discrimination to flourish, reproducing gender inequalities (Kantola, 2008). The social order therefore appears to remain unchallenged as women (on the surface appear to) migrate from the 'other' symbolic space of femininity to 'one' symbolic space of masculinity, enabling masculinity to sustain its hierarchical superiority (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) and prevail undetected (Kelan, 2008).

Fagenson and Jackson's (1993) assertion that the more masculinity a woman demonstrates – whether such behaviours are comfortable or require a conscious decision – the more successful she will be perceived to be by others, is not only damaging to individual women but also neglects to consider women's socially perceived sex category.

As highlighted in more recent research on doing and undoing of gender (e.g. Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010) women's socially perceived sex category and displays of masculine behaviour creates incongruence jolting others assumptions of what is acceptable behaviour for a woman (Mavin, 2009b).

The socially perceived 'metaphorical sex change' (Korac-Kakabadse and Kouzmin, 1997: 183) as women become so-called 'honorary men', - whether they are already masculine and content with this or not - is positively interpreted in relation to her leader role expectation, it is not congenial to her social role expectation as a woman (Eagly and Johnson, 1990). In Eagly and Carli's (2007) article, an anonymous woman leader participant highlights the penalty of women behaving like men, "the men don't like her and the women don't either" (Eagly and Carli, 2007: 67) because she's "sold out" (Mavin, 2009b: 85). Whilst women demonstrate behaviours associated with successful leadership, they are counter-stereotypical to their social role expectations as a woman (Bligh and Kohles, 2008). Therefore, from the gendered social order perspective, a woman behaving in a masculine way is like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole (Kelan, 2008).

Continuing to work within the gender binary results in new labels being applied to “new behaviours adopted by groups of boys and girls as alternative masculinities and femininities simply because the group itself is composed of biological males or females” (Risman, 2009: 82) e.g. ‘honorary man’. Risman (2009: 82) suggests that we must “discuss the new world they inhabit and how they are making their lives within it rather than inventing a label for a kind of femininity that includes the traits and behaviours previously restricted to boys and men”. Therefore, greater attention should be paid to ways in which doing gender is changing and furthermore, whether and how gender is being undone (Risman, 2009).

2.5.2 Movement to Feminine Forms of Leadership

A second strategy which has gained greater ground theoretically than in practice (Elliott and Stead, 2008), is the emphasis on women’s perceived difference (Hekman, 1997; Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) as “women do not always play the ‘organisational game’ by male-constructed unwritten rules” (Singh *et al.*, 2002: 77). This has resulted in women’s perceived difference being valorised (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004), positioned as the new ideal within the literature (Kelan, 2008) as women’s leadership behaviour is congruent with their gender role expectation (Eagly and Karau, 2002).

Due Billing and Alvesson (2000) argue that contemporary leadership frameworks have been constructed upon relational and emotional attributes, perceived to be in harmony with femininities (Mavin, 2009a; Elliott and Stead, 2008; Eagly, 2007). Given this understanding, effective leadership, therefore, shifts from more authoritative (perceived masculine) approaches towards a propensity for more coaching and teaching styles (Mavin, 2009b; Eagly, 2007) that facilitate successful team development (Eagly, 2007). Transformational leadership in particular has been noted to have many parallels with femininity and communal behaviour (Rosener, 1990; Bass *et al.*, 1996; Yammarino *et al.*, 1997; Pounder and Coleman, 2002; Trinidad and Normore, 2005) which is discussed in the next section.

2.5.2.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is understood to be based upon three elements; charisma, individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1990; Burke, 2006). Bass *et al.*'s (1996) survey rated women highest in comparison to men on all dimensions of transformational leadership. Yammarino *et al.*'s, (1997) study further supported this assertion, highlighting that women leaders tended to develop relationships with subordinates that were closely aligned to transformational leadership.

More recently, Trinidad and Normore's (2005) conceptual study reviewing extant literature on how women lead in business and educational contexts highlighted that women tend to adopt a democratic and participative style, positioning transformational leadership as women's preferred leadership style as a consequence of its close relation to female values. Furthermore, Powell *et al.*'s, (2008) later survey of part time MBA students' evaluations of men and women leaders exhibiting transformational and transactional leadership styles reported that women displaying transformational behaviours were perceived more positively than men demonstrating the same behaviour. Powell *et al.*, (2008) argued that transformational leadership is, therefore, aligned to the gender social role expectations of women.

Eagly's (2007) study also found that women leaders were more transformational than men, but she also highlighted women as being more transactional than men. Eagly (2007) argues that the transformational repertoire of leadership could prove useful for women to deal with the double bind as they face incongruence between their socially perceived leadership role and gender role.

Eagly (2005) further contends that transformational leadership as a style is not specifically masculine but rather more feminine, increasing the congruence between the gender role expectations of women and leadership with the result of enabling women to be perceived as effective leaders. This argument aligns with the understanding of doing and undoing gender drawn upon within this thesis as women's socially perceived feminine behaviour performed through a socially perceived woman's body enables greater congruence (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010) and does not jolt people's assumptions (Mavin, 2009b).

Under this contention, Eagly (2007) essentialises women, reproducing stereotypes of women leaders (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000), as she fails to disrupt masculinity's hierarchical superiority (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Positioning femininity and consequently women as the new ideal (Kelan, 2008) serves only to maintain the masculine-feminine dichotomy and consequentially the gendered social order. Pounder and Coleman (2002: 127) argue that "those contending that transformational leadership competencies are largely the domain of the female leader are as guilty of stereotyping as those who would equate effective leadership with male characteristics". Feminine forms of leadership are problematised in the following section.

2.5.2.2 Problematising Feminine Forms of Leadership

Due Billing and Alvesson (2000) problematise hailing a feminine form of leadership by highlighting four key concerns. Firstly, assumptions based on essentialist notions of a female skills sets, based on their domestic experiences perpetuates women's role as caregivers and their second place within the social order (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000; Elliott and Stead, 2008). This not only devalues its significance, but also the potential contribution women can make within the leadership domain (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000). Due Billing and Alvesson (2000) highlight that celebrating and drawing on the advantages domestic and child care experiences offer legitimises women's second place within patriarchy.

There is great disparity between the theoretical developments in the literature, which embrace femininity as a means of facilitating organisational change, positioning women with a 'female advantage', and women's leadership practice in reality (Elliott and Stead, 2008). Within the organisational context its value and significance remains in second place, failing to challenge male norms (Elliott and Stead, 2008).

The importance of feminine values is seldom referred to outside of the gender literature (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000). Consequently, without strategic value more broadly within the literature and in practice as a positive leadership approach, femininities will not gain women access to the boardroom (Mavin, 2009b). This is illustrated by Eagly (2007) as she highlights that despite the US praising women for their effective leadership skills, a greater number of people still prefer a male leader than a female leader. She further contends that leadership styles can only be effective if others deem it to be acceptable and legitimate. Consequently, as femininity remains in second place to masculinity within the social order, asserting femininity as the new form of leadership represents gender social disorder (Höpfl and Matila, 2007) and unsurprisingly enables masculine superiority to flourish.

Notions of feminine leadership within the literature, highlighting women as having the right skills to gain hierarchical superiority (Eagly, 2007) at a conceptual level do not reflect women's leadership realities. This is frustrating, confusing (Mavin, 2009b) and misleading for women as whilst feminine leadership offers a different leadership approach this difference is not valued (Eagly, 2007) and women remain in second place in the gender social order.

Secondly, the issue of integrating feminine leadership with instrumental concerns is raised. Due Billing and Alvesson (2000:150) highlight that the "instrumental nature of business and many other organisations clashes with the well being of families". They further contend that domestic skills are perceived to be peripheral in relation to other organisational functional competencies. The result is the reproduction of gender divisions of labour specifically at senior levels, as women are deemed suitable for leadership positions in care giving sectors (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000) aligned with gender social role expectations. Due Billing and Alvesson's (2000) third issue with feminine forms of leadership is that in acclaiming a feminine style of leadership stereotypical gender social role expectations of women's behaviour is reinforced, constraining possibilities. Powell *et al.*, (2008) themselves acknowledge that their results perpetuate the debate that women have different, and stereotypical leadership styles. Yet, when similarities between the sexes are evident and women jolt our assumptions by exhibiting agentic behaviours (Mavin, 2009a, 2009b) we continue to focus on the differences between the sexes aligned with our stereotypical gender role assumptions.

Furthermore, in setting up essentialist feminine leadership expectations of women, women who are more comfortable exhibiting agentic behaviours will always be perceived to be deviant (Lewis, 2006) as they neglect their social role expectations as a woman and as a leader by not taking on a nurturing organisational role (Mavin, 2009b) and therefore jolt our assumptions (Mavin, 2009a, 2009b).

Fourthly, Due Billing and Alvesson (2000:151) suggest feminine leadership exploits their “so-called special skills” placing women as the “social workers” (Ferrario, 1991: 19) and “emotional labourers” (Due Billing and Alvesson 2000: 155) or “emotional specialists” (Mavin, 2009b: 82; Ross-Smith *et al.*, 2007) as women are expected to deal with relational aspects of the organisation reproducing gender stereotypes. This results in the female disadvantage, as men are permitted to behave in both agentic and communal ways and are not penalised or devalued as a result (Mavin, 2009b).

Due Billing and Alvesson (2000) are critical of the notion of feminine leadership but are careful not to disregard it as unhelpful because they recognise its contribution in respect of placing “gender on the leadership agenda” (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000: 151) prompting discussions of male domination whilst encouraging more women to consider entering senior leadership and persuading organisations of women’s positive contributions. However, they still assert that feminine leadership should be met with caution as the same aspects that were previously used to exclude women from senior leadership roles are now positioned to facilitate their entry (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000; Elliott and Stead, 2008).

Usurping men’s leadership power and privilege with women may have little transformative power (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000; Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). However, it is important for this thesis to critically debate feminine leadership (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000) to evade becoming trapped within the gender dualism and positioning femininity – and women – as the new leadership ideal (Kelan, 2008) perpetuating the notion that women are a homogenous group. Moving from valuing the masculine (pro-male) to valourising the feminine (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) (pro-female) is unbalanced (Ferrario, 1991; Powell *et al.*, 2008). Doing so fails to “address more structurally embedded organisational practices and procedures that continue to favour traditionally masculine ways of working” (Elliott and Stead, 2008: 161) enabling masculinities’ hierarchical superiority to remain intact (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Such essentialist understandings are unhelpful and will not be drawn upon within this study of entrepreneurial leadership.

The gender in leadership theory base is clearly aware of the gendered nature of leadership, however, the challenge remains *how do we get ourselves out of it?* Due Billing and Alvesson (2000) argue that future studies should avoid constructing and reconstructing women to make them appear suitable candidates. Mavin (2009b: 82) asserts that “you have to get yourself into the dualisms to be able to get yourself out of them” (Mavin, 2009b: 82). For this thesis, it was appropriate to explore feminine forms of leadership to highlight from a gender lens how essentialist understandings are unhelpful, do not enable progressive debates and should, therefore, not be drawn upon within this study of entrepreneurial leadership. The next section turns to discussions of how we can begin to ‘unlearn’ and ‘rethink’ (Mavin *et al.*, 2004) our gendered selves.

2.6 Disrupting the Gender Binary

As Ferrario (1991) highlighted almost two decades ago, “it is time to stop talking about sex differences in leadership style and acknowledge the fact that many women managers as well as men, can and do possess desirable leadership attributes”. Mavin *et al.*, (2004) suggest that we must ‘unlearn’ and ‘rethink’ our learnt state of being in relation to gender and leadership to disrupt masculinities’ hierarchical superiority (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) as its perpetuation will result in the gender and leadership problem being misdiagnosed, reducing the possibility of progressing understandings. As Kelan (2010) more recently argues, we need to question the gender binary, rather than continuing to map or map differently, which simply reproduces the binary.

As previously discussed (see section 2.4 and 2.5), current understandings of leadership “work with the given” (Mavin, 2009b: 82) gender dualism which Elliott and Stead (2008) suggest in their review of women in leadership research portrays a landscape of contradiction and paradox. They highlight a number of incongruous themes: e.g. the number of women leaders is increasing yet women still struggle to obtain equal pay and status; femininities aligned to women are positioned as valuable, however, theory and practice continue to adopt, and normalise masculine values sustaining the social order. Women in leadership are, therefore, constructed and reconstructed as *enablers* of leadership rather than *enacting* leadership, reaffirming masculine domination (Elliott and Stead, 2008).

The contradiction and paradox that Elliott and Stead (2008) highlight suggests the need to persuade ourselves that we have progressed in relation to gender and that the issue of gender has been solved with such discrimination eradicated. However, this further highlights the constraints of leadership theorising. We must move beyond homogenous categorisations of male/female and masculine/feminine (Bowring, 2004), emphasising differences between the sex categories to demonstrate women's perceived innate leadership lack (Höpfl and Matila, 2007). Continuation of such labelling serves only to perpetuate the polarisation which consistently places women at the margins of organisations sustaining their subordination and undermining their abilities in relation to men (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) as masculinity continues to permeate social structures and social processes (Hearn, 1998).

Mavin (2009a) argues that to begin to move forward gender must be made visible. Neglecting gender as a key element of leadership enables masculine dominance to flourish as the gendered assumptions that underpin successful leadership and guide our perceptions and responses to women and men leaders remain unchallenged (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004).

Women must be mindful that their leadership style will elicit different interpretations to that of men (Mavin, 2009a) because the criterion of assessment is based upon different gender social role expectations performed through different socially perceived sex categories (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010). This is highlighted in Kumra's (2010) study exploring the social construction of merit in a professional service firm of international consultants. Kumra's (2010) findings support Kanter's (1977) homosocial reproduction process, understood to be the process by which "those displaying merit in the same way that existing senior members of the firm have done, are viewed as meritocratic and rewarded accordingly" (Kumra, 2010: 15). Given merit is constructed upon masculine terms - perpetuating extant gendered understandings of organising – any "deviance from the benchmark precludes merit to be recognised and valued, and hence becomes invisible" (Kumra, 2010: 14). Consequently, femininity and masculinity performed through a socially perceived woman's body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) is perceived as different and, therefore, not tolerated within the firm (Kumra, 2010).

Eagly *et al.*, (2000) highlight, people's perceptions and reactions to leadership behaviours in relation to gendered expectations, influence leaders' behaviours. Therefore, as Due Billing and Alvesson (2000) suggest, we must remain cognisant of the gender labels we attribute and their consequences as a result of our gender social role expectations and an individual's socially perceived sex category (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

In order to move beyond current dualistic thinking (Baxter and Hughes, 2004), we need to acknowledge that a blend of task (masculine and agentic) and relational (feminine and communal) orientated behaviours are required for effective leadership and are open to and can be performed by both women and men (Ferrario, 1991). As Mavin (2009b) highlights within the current dichotomous gender framework in which we live and work, women must be extremely skilful to balance agentic and communal behaviours in the right proportions within the appropriate contexts to be perceived as an effective leader.

Movement to an understanding, whereby gender is not dichotomous, requires a significant shift in systems of thought (Gherardi, 1994). Firstly, a significant shift in the belief systems that underpin organisational practices is required before a shift in the understandings of leadership (Elliott and Stead, 2008) can be made to progress towards a position whereby women and men are not essentialised and difference does not signify a lack (Höpfl and Matila, 2007). We must move beyond the given dualistic framework (Mavin, 2009b) in order to disrupt masculine hierarchical superiority (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004).

Knights and Kerfoot (2004) argue that the gender hierarchy is a consequence of the misleading gender binary. Thomas and Linstead (2002) suggest that dissolving gender binaries will enable gender fluidity in order to disrupt the social order. However, Knights and Kerfoot (2004: 430) question whether the binaries can ever be dissolved as they highlight the need to overcome the "representational epistemology that continues to dominate even studies of gender, let alone social science more generally".

Instead Knights and Kerfoot, (2004: 431) suggest destabilising the "hierarchical privilege of one side of the gender divide" as a more effective strategy, as they contend that the gender binary will be challenged as a consequence of this disruption of the social order, transforming the binary into one set of analytical distinctions in which appropriateness is dependent upon context only.

Concern is not to deny masculine discourses but disrupt their discursive and hierarchical dominance in organisations as a way of restraining their repressive consequences both for their perpetrators (usually but not exclusively successful men) and victims (often but not exclusively women).

(Knight and Kerfoot, 2004: 440)

They suggest that this disruption can be attained by occupying “a space between representations of gender and the conditions of subjectivity and language that makes them possible” to enable reflexive ambivalence (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004: 430). By remaining reflexive and creating space to stand back from the space of representation, Knights and Kerfoot’s (2004) contention of how we produce and reproduce subjectivities of gender can be explored. Deconstructing everyday acts by remaining reflexive facilitates the development of language (Elliott and Stead, 2008) required to address the ‘gender we think’ (Gherardi, 1994). The ‘gender we think’ informs the ‘gender we do’ (Gherardi, 1994) requiring consciousness raising of gender and gendered domains within which we live and work. However, Knights and Kerfoot’s (2004) offering is a theoretical position is not explored in relation to how and whether this is achievable in practice.

Mavin and Grandy’s (2010) more recent study on doing gender and doing gender differently, responds to Kelan’s (2010) criticism that developments on doing gender have continued to work within the gender binary. They suggest that by simultaneously doing gender and doing gender differently, engaging in both masculine and feminine behaviours, unsettles gender binaries over time and creates possibilities for disruption.

As highlighted by Elliott and Stead (2008) and reiterated throughout this discussion, attempting to disrupt the gender binary without perpetuating the social order (Kelan, 2010) is extremely complex. Given that gender complexities and tensions are central to studies of gender and support the development of this thesis the next section explores the nature of gender complexities and tensions which scholars must manage as they begin to challenge the gender dualism.

2.7 Reproducing Gendered Assumptions: Gender Complexities and Tensions

Scholars attempting to disrupt the gender binary have highlighted the difficulty in overcoming dualistic thinking in organisations without reproducing gendered understandings (Styhre *et al.*, 2005; Benschop and Doorewaard, 1998; Korvajärvi, 1998).

Simply “speaking of gender differences helps reproduce gender differences, while refusing to speak of gender differences leaves actual gender differences unnoticed” (Styhre *et al.*, 2005: 565). Styhre *et al.*, (2005) and Coupland (2001) argue that we are limited by the nature of language as we can only use language culturally available to us to be understood by others (Coupland, 2001). It is argued that studies, which have attempted to move beyond the gender binary, have served to reproduce the social order (Styhre, *et al.*, 2005; Benschop and Doorewaard, 1998; Korvajärvi, 1998).

Bendl's (2008) study outlines the reproduction of gender in organisational discourse and highlights the need to displace the binary structure with a creation of a ‘third term’, such as a ‘hinge word’ “to allow other meanings to emerge, ‘to make the unthinkable thinkable’” (Bendl, 2008: 61). However, it is questionable how attainable this is, given that to speak is never neutral (Irigaray, 2002), therefore, to speak of differences, serves to reproduce differences (Styhre *et al.*, 2005). Styhre *et al.*'s, (2005) suggest that to simply be aware and reflect upon this understanding is perhaps a first step to uncover underlying assumptions, and understand such complexity.

Given the gender lens of this thesis, the study recognises the complexities of how gender is “accomplished in everyday interaction” (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 125) against a backcloth of patriarchy which prohibit social flux. Consequently, gender is marked by tensions and complexities as the richness of our lives requires social fluidity to cross symbolic borders of femininity and masculinity (Gherardi, 1994).

Knights and Kerfoot's (2004) strategy to disrupt masculine hierarchical superiority by occupying a space between representation and their conditions of possibility within language is a complex at conceptual level even before considerations of how their theoretical strategy could possibly be implemented in practice.

Knights and Kerfoot's (2004) strategy could perhaps be interpreted as the "possibility of impossibility" which Hearn (1998: 3) refers to as a form of paradox, with the focus being on social process.

The doing and undoing of gender (Deutsch, 2007) should be analysed as paradoxical as it surfaces ambiguity and contradiction of "how gender is being done, leaving room for the individual agency of women (and men) reproducing as well as challenging and changing gender relations and practices in organisations", (van den Brink and Stobbe, 2009: 467). Furthermore, "paradox could help us to disrupt the hierarchical superiority of masculinity" through its need for continuous reflection of ambiguities and contradictions (van den Brink and Stobbe, 2009: 466). Concepts of ambivalence, ambiguity, contradiction and paradox are surfaced and explored in the section that follows to support answering the overall research question which guides this thesis 'leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?'

2.7.1 Highlighting Ambivalence, Ambiguity, Contradiction and Paradox

Complexities and tensions occur as women struggle to maintain their dual presence across dichotomous spaces and followers struggle to understand their women leaders in relation to their social role expectations as women (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) and leader role expectations. Such struggles are theorised by Grandy and Mavin (2010) in their study exploring the hidden emotions in the identity construction of dirty workers, through concepts of ambiguities, ambivalence and contradictions. Hearn (1998: 3) suggests that "ambiguity, contradiction, paradox are three ways of analysing gendered complexities, and tensions". This study acknowledges the possibility of the emergence of ambivalence, ambiguities, contradiction and paradox when exploring women entrepreneurs' experiences and their followers' perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership and how this may support understandings of the doing and undoing of gender to make sense of their current position.

Ambivalence is understood to be the co-existence of opposing and conflicting attitudes or feelings towards an object or person. It is understood as a process, which "on the one hand, the existing gender order is reinforced, but on the other, it is resisted" (Nencel, 2010: 83). It is through such strategies of accommodation and resistance that women's agency is highlighted. Accommodation constitutes a process whereby the social order is reproduced, and resistance is a process whereby the social order is resisted with the potential to lead to social change (Nencel, 2010).

Fournier and Kelemen's (2001) study of women managers' learning sets highlighted ambivalence. Whilst the effects of the learning set attempted to disrupt gendered positions, they also serve to reproduce gendered practice in relation to 'women' versus 'management' working upon the same exclusionary networking principles that the 'old boys' network had worked along. Fournier and Kelemen (2001) suggest that in an attempt to create a space outside of corporate masculinity, the women fail to challenge gendered practices within the organisational context. However, they further argue the potential advantages of:

constructing (temporary) spaces at the margins of organisations where women can reflect upon their dual positions. That such spaces are ambivalent, contested and fragile may at least ensure that they remain places for exploration rather than for the further confinement of gender positions in organization, and may serve to eschew the danger that many women in the study were well aware of, that of creating more spaces of exclusion .

(Fournier and Kelemen, 2001: 286)

Therefore, Fournier and Kelemen's (2001) study resists corporate masculinity by creating a space from which women are able to reflect, yet the act of doing so reproduces the gender order through exclusionary activity on the margins, highlighting the ambivalent nature of such activities.

The understanding of ambiguity within this thesis opens up the possibility of interpreting an expression, action or behaviour in more than one way. Hearn (1998:1) suggests it offers "both rigidity and stasis, on the one hand, and flexibility and change on the other", highlighting the potential of multiple understandings of *doing* and *undoing* gender (Deutsch, 2007).

Contradiction is understood to be a combination of thoughts, actions and behaviours which are opposed to one another. "Contradictions may signal discursal instability and hence act as pointers to struggle and avenues of social change" (Sunderland, 2004: 13) by dislodging dominant discourses to enable, at least theoretically, a space to create a new way of seeing and thinking (Fletcher, 1999; Weedon, 1997).

Coupland's (2001) study exploring how graduate trainees account for change during the graduate scheme, surfaced the contradiction within their talk subverting and reproducing dominant organisational discourses as they acknowledged and refuted change through: constructing and contrasting themselves against the organisational ideal and their similarity and difference to other employees.

A further consideration in *doing* and *undoing* of gender (Deutsch, 2007) is the concept of paradox (van den Brink and Stobbe, 2009). Paradox is understood to be the simultaneous existence of contradictory or mutually exclusive aspects (Pesonen *et al.*, 2009). Doing gender should be analysed as paradoxical as it surfaces ambiguity and contradiction of "how gender is being done, leaving room for the individual agency of women (and men) reproducing as well as challenging and changing gender relations and practices in organisations" (van den Brink and Stobbe, 2009: 467). van den Brink and Stobbe's (2009) understanding of paradox recognises individual agency aligning with a key understanding within this thesis.

Olsson and Walker's (2004) study highlights paradox within the strategies of differentiation and identification that women executives draw upon when they discursively locate them within organisational context. Women's identity is thereby conceptualised as paradoxical and unresolved within the masculine organisational context involving "shifting, relational and frequently contradictory discursive constructions" (Olsson and Walker, 2004: 250).

Poole and Van de Ven, (1989) argue that paradox can be created and sustained through separation and accommodation: (1) separation in terms of different spaces and different moments in time, and (2) accommodation in relation to acceptance, confrontation or transcendence (Pesonen *et al.*, 2009). Pesonen *et al.*, 's (2009) study of Finnish women professionals' experiences of accession and success within the boardroom, highlights strategies of separation and accommodation through the identification of two discourses; a discourse of competence and a discourse of gender, which they argue constitute a gender paradox, something rarely addressed within research on women in corporate boards. Pesonen *et al.*, (2009) identify key dimensions in relation to discourses of competence and gender (see Table 2.7.1 below) to outline the complexities and tensions of the women's experiences in terms as contradictory elements highlight the paradoxically unresolved nature of their experiences.

Dimension	Discourse of Competence	Discourse of Gender
On men and women	Sameness	Difference
On accessing corporate boards	Meritocracy	Complying to the rules of the male game
On (the potential for change)	Building on experience and demonstrating credibility	Change in men's attitudes (and women's mutual support)

Table 2.7.1 Discourses in the talk of female board professionals from Pesonen, S., Tienari, J., Vanhala, S. (2009) "The boardroom paradox", *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 24(5), pp: 327-345.

The unresolved nature of paradox creates space to provide further understandings to support individuals in making sense of their experiences and perceptions within context (Johansson, 1998) against a backdrop of patriarchy.

Grandy and Mavin's (2010) study offers the concept of 'double talk' and 'double speak' which they contend enables contradictory beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours to co-exist. It provides an understanding of the struggles (theorised as ambiguities, ambivalence and contradictions) individuals experience in their identity construction as they strive for order and balance (Grandy and Mavin, 2010). It is, therefore, a useful concept to draw upon in understanding "things that are said and done as a method of making non-reflexive gender dynamics more visible, 'letting people describe their work experiences' (Martin, 2006: 269)" (Nencel, 2010: 73) and understand the complexity of their situation. As Sunderland (2007) notes contradictions are part of everyday life and whilst we might not always be aware of this, we draw upon different discourses at different points in time, within different contexts. Understanding how women (re)construct their experiences through 'double talk' or 'double speak' (Grandy and Mavin, 2010), therefore, has the potential to make a contribution to the female entrepreneurship literature.

'Unlearning' and 'rethinking' gender (Mavin *et al.*, 2004) requires significant reflexive vigilance to ensure empirical studies do not reproduce gender binaries and masculine superiority. Powell *et al.* (2008) highlight the ease of falling back into the 'given' (Mavin, 2009b) stereotypes as gender binaries are implicit within the 'gender we think', gendered social role expectations of women and men, and the 'gender we do' (Gherardi, 1994), the gender we practice and practise (Martin, 2006), which becomes difficult to break free from. Therefore, at a conceptual level we know and understand the possibilities of what can be achieved in relation to disrupting masculine hierarchical superiority.

On a practical level, saving difference without reproducing inequality is a complex process to establish and maintain within current socio-cultural understandings. Further studies which remain reflexively vigilant in relation to emerging “paradox could help us to disrupt the hierarchical superiority of masculinity (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004)” as it facilitates continuous reflection of ambiguity and contradiction (van den Brink and Stobbe, 2009: 466). However, studies which have empirically explored gender complexities have not done so from a small firm perspective. Furthermore, research which considered the small business context from women entrepreneurs’ and followers’ perspectives would offer a potential contribution to the existing theory base.

2.8 Envisioning Gender Anew: Developing an Analytical Framework

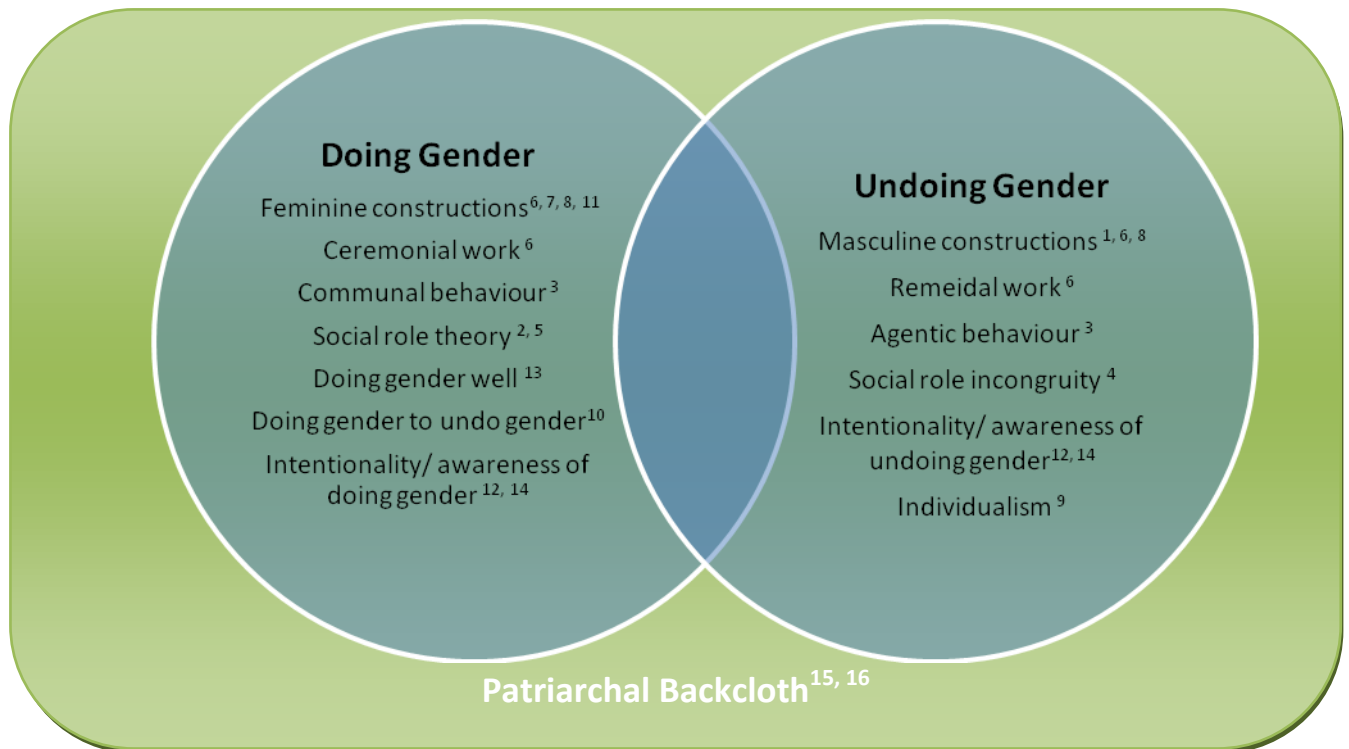
Drawing upon the gender and leadership literature, a framework of doing and undoing gender is developed for this thesis in order to explore women entrepreneurs’ and followers’ experiences of entrepreneurial leadership. The framework acknowledges that gender is something we do through conforming and resisting gender norms (Deutsch, 2007) and thereby recognises individual agency (Messerschmidt, 2009).

This chapter has outlined the importance of patriarchy as a theoretical device in providing a background to everyday lives and consequently providing the backcloth to this research, framing understandings of entrepreneurship, leadership and entrepreneurial leadership. Patriarchy is drawn upon as a “system of social structures, and practices” (Walby, 1989: 214) which has enabled men to access positions of power and privilege (Simpson and Lewis, 2005) within organisations. A patriarchal backcloth is an aspect of social reality upon which many social constructions are made and interpreted, and precedes individual agency. Consequently, individualism, understood to be individuals’ free choice and control over both their personal and professional lives (Kelan, 2008) is always set against a backcloth of patriarchy. Drawing upon Connell and Messerschmidt’s (2005: 848) concept of hybridisation, new configurations of gender practice are possible which blur gender difference without undermining patriarchy. This enables the exploration of the doing and undoing of gender to understand how individuals comply or resist gender norms (Martin, 2006) or simultaneously enact multiple masculinities and femininities (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) against a backcloth of patriarchy which has the potential to unsettle the gender binary overtime (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Messerschmidt (2009) argues that sex category is enmeshed within the (un)doing of gender. This understanding is imperative in understanding experiences of gender given the study's recognition of social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al*, 2000). The framework acknowledges that sex category is essential within the interpretation of the (un)doing of gender given an individual's behaviour is deemed appropriate by others dependent upon the body through which it is performed (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Consequently, exploring how women's behaviour is deemed appropriate, aligning with social role theory, or interpreted to be inappropriate, creating social role incongruity (Eagly and Karau, 2002), is essential in understanding experiences of entrepreneurial leadership.

The framework of doing and undoing gender illustrated in figure 2.8 is the first part of the framework which will develop across chapters three and four to demonstrate the contribution of the framework to the interpretations outlined in this thesis as a contribution to the study of entrepreneurial leadership. The framework outlines examples to inform how doing and undoing gender will be identified within the data. Under the concept of 'doing gender' examples of femininities (Gherardi, 1994; Hines, 1992; Grant, 1988; Marshall, 1993) and communal behaviour (Eagly and Carli, 2007) through the ceremonial work women engage with (Gherardi, 1994), highlighting how women behave, or are socially perceived to behave appropriately for their sex category and therefore do gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

The concept of 'undoing gender' will explore examples of masculinities (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997; Hines, 1992; Gherardi, 1994) and agentic behaviour (Eagly and Carli, 2007) through the remedial work women engage with (Gherardi, 1994), highlighting how women behave, or are socially perceived to behave incongruently for their socially perceived sex category (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Explicit examples of individualism, refuting claims of gender inequality rendering gender invisible (Kelan, 2008), will also be drawn upon to highlight experiences of undoing gender.



Alvesson and Due Billing (1997)¹; Eagly, (1987)²; Eagly and Carli (2007)³; Eagly and Karau (2002)⁴; Eagly *et al.*, (2000)⁵; Gherardi (1994)⁶; Grant (1988)⁷; Hines, (1992)⁸; Kelan (2008⁹, 2010¹⁰); Marshall (1993)¹¹; Martin (2006)¹²; Mavin and Grandy (2010)¹³; Nencel (2010)¹⁴; Simpson and Lewis (2005)¹⁵; Walby, (1989)¹⁶

Figure 2.8 Framework of Doing and Undoing Gender

In response to Martin (2006), Messerschmidt (2009) and Nencel's (2010) call to explore "whether doing gender may or may not be consciously intended as a masculine or feminine act" (Messerschmidt, 2009: 88) the reflexive and non-reflexive nature of doing and undoing gender will also be explored for (un)doing of gender.

Exploring women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of gender through a framework of doing and undoing gender is a sensitising device to the flux and fluidity of gender which Martin (2006; 2001) calls for to understand the complexity and tensions of gender. Furthermore, the framework provides an opportunity to envision experiences of gender in entrepreneurial leadership anew as it begins to challenge the gender binary which Kelan (2010) cautions against and provide insights for future research.

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the gender and leadership theory base relating to patriarchy, doing and undoing gender, leadership as a masculine concept, the emergence of feminine forms of leadership and the inherent complexities and tensions when attempting to disrupt the gender binary. Through this discussion an analytical framework of doing and undoing gender emerged which will be further developed throughout the literature reviews in Chapters Three and Four to support the data analysis from a gender and leadership perspective.

Drawing on the discussions and understandings of gender and leadership outlined in this chapter, the following chapter extends the literature review to explore female entrepreneurship research through a gender lens, highlighting any parallels or differences in relation to the gender dualisms that produce and reproduce masculine superiority. Developing from discussions in Chapter Two, it will explore how women entrepreneurs manage their social role and entrepreneurial role expectations. Discussions on the advantages of converging leadership and entrepreneurship concepts are delineated before authentic leadership is drawn upon in Chapter Four, to further understandings of entrepreneurial leadership through a gender lens.

Chapter Three

Female Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Leadership

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to review extant female entrepreneurship research and the emerging entrepreneurial leadership concept through a gender lens. The chapter builds on Chapter Two, to contribute to the first research objective to: *'critically review the gender in leadership, entrepreneurship, authentic leadership literatures before merging the three theory bases through which women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership can be theorised'*. The chapter will also further develop the gender research lens from an entrepreneurial leadership perspective to address the second research objective to *'develop a gender lens, against a backdrop of patriarchy, to explore women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership to contribute new insights to studies of entrepreneurial leadership'*. Chapter Four will build upon this chapter to highlight potential theoretical developments to be gained from the convergence with the leadership literature, analysed through the authentic leadership framework.

The chapter discusses the masculine construction of entrepreneurship; drawing upon the gendered language and comparative studies which have created and sustained masculine hegemony within the theory base. The appropriateness of taking a gender perspective within this thesis is then highlighted as the intertwined nature of gender and entrepreneurship is outlined. The gendered development of entrepreneurship is then illustrated through the rise of meritocracy with the discussion highlighting authenticity as a useful concept to understand women's agency. This is followed by a discussion of the need for a feminist perspective within the field to develop entrepreneurship theoretically and empirically. The benefits of converging the leadership and entrepreneurship fields both historically and conceptually are then outlined to explore experiences of entrepreneurial leadership, before extant gendered developments are highlighted and the need for a gender perspective is outlined to progress developments within the field.

3.2 Masculine Construction of Entrepreneurship

In parallel to developments within the leadership field (e.g. Schnurr, 2008; Eagly and Carli, 2003, 2007; Eagly, 2007; Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000), concepts of 'entrepreneurship' and 'entrepreneur' have been historically and culturally produced and reproduced on masculine terms (Mirchandani, 1999; Ahl, 2002, Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; 2004b; Lewis, 2006; Lewis 2009) framed against a patriarchal backcloth. Consequently, women and men have learned to become entrepreneurs against this backcloth which has also framed followers' expectations of entrepreneurship.

The masculine norm is utilised as the "yardstick" (Mirchandani, 1999: 233; Simpson and Lewis, 2005) from which to measure the extent to which women demonstrate 'successful' – masculine – entrepreneurial traits and behaviour (Mirchandani, 1999; Simpson and Lewis, 2005). As Lewis (2006: 455) contends:

members of a minority group such as women are therefore judged by and evaluated against a normative established by the majority group which is presented as the self-evident standard against which difference is measured.

This section will explore how scholarly research and the media have played a key role (Baker *et al.*, 1997) in creating and sustaining an image of 'entrepreneur' as a heroic self-made man (Ahl, 2006) rendering women invisible (Marlow and Carter, 2004; Simpson and Lewis, 2005). The sections that follow outline the gendered linguistic practices and essentialist studies of extant entrepreneurship research to explore experiences of gender in entrepreneurship to support answering the overall research question.

3.2.1 Gendered Linguistic Practices

The language used to describe 'entrepreneur' and 'entrepreneurship' is symptomatic of the concepts' masculine roots (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; b; Bruni *et al.*, 2005; Patterson and Mavin, 2009) (e.g. strong willed, energetic, active, visionary, daring, courageous, risk taking, driven and achievement orientated). Such linguistic practices have been reproduced over time; creating truth effects (Kelan, 2008) which sustain masculine hegemony within entrepreneurship.

This creates congruence between the social role expectations of men to be masculine performed through a socially perceived man's body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Ahl's (2006) key research paper on the discourse analysis of 81 female entrepreneurship articles highlights the dominance of masculine language drawn upon to construct the field. Ahl (2006) mapped out the language used to describe the concepts of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship against Bem's (1981) masculinity and femininity index (see Table 3.2.1a comparing masculinity with 'entrepreneur' and Table 3.2.1b comparing femininity with 'entrepreneur').

Bem's (1981) masculinity words	Words used to describe an Entrepreneur
Self reliant	Self centred, internal locus of control, self efficacious, mentally free, able
Defends own beliefs	Strong willed
Assertive	Able to withstand opposition
Strong personality	Resolute, firm in temper
Forceful, athletic	Unusually energetic, capacity for sustained effort, active
Has leadership abilities	Skilled at organising, visionary
Willing to take risks	Seeks difficulty, optimistic, daring, courageous
Makes decisions easily	Decisive in spite of uncertainty
Self-sufficient	Independent and detached
Dominant, aggressive	Influential, seeks power, wants a private kingdom and a dynasty
Willing to take a stand	Stick to a course
Act as a leader	Leading economic and moral progress, pilot of industrialism, manager
Individualistic	Detached
Competitive	Wants to fight and conquer, wants to prove superiority
Ambitious	Achievement orientated
Independent	Independent, mentally free
Analytical	Exercising sound judgement, superior business talent, foresighted, astute, perceptive, intelligent

Table 3.2.1a Highlighting the alignment of Bem's words of masculinity and words used to describe an entrepreneur taken from Ahl, H. (2006) "Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions" *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30(5) 595-621.

Ahl (2006) contends that words conveying masculinity have greater alignment and are positioned as credible when associated with entrepreneur (see Table 3.2.1a.). There was great disparity between the words used in the articles to describe an entrepreneur and words of femininity (see Table 3.2.1b).

Bem's (1981) femininity words	Opposite of Entrepreneur Words
Gentle	Cautious
Loyal	Follower dependent
Sensitive to the needs of others	Selfless, connected
Shy	Cowardly
Yielding	Yielding, no need to put a mark on the world, subordinate, passenger, irresolute, following, weak, wavering, external locus on control, fatalist, wishy-washy, uncommitted, avoids power, avoids struggle and competition, self doubting, no need to prove oneself
Gullible	Gullible, blind, shortsighted, impressionable, making bad judgements, unable, mentally constrained, stupid, disorganized, chaotic, lack of business talent, moody
Sympathetic, affectionate, understanding, warm, compassionate, eager to soothe hurt feelings, soft spoken, tender, loves children, does not use harsh language, cheerful, childlike, flatterable	No match

Table 3.2.1b Highlighting words of femininity from Bem are direct opposites of the words used to describe an entrepreneur taken from Ahl, H. (2006) "Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions" *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30(5), pp: 595-621.

Ahl (2006) noted that words depicting femininity are positioned conversely to the words drawn upon to construct an entrepreneur. Furthermore, Ahl (2006) conducted the same analysis for entrepreneurship, with positive connotations attached to language constructed on masculine terms fostering change and improvement. Masculine notions of aggression, ambition, and competitiveness are aligned positively with entrepreneurship and are not associated with femininity and women (Marlow, 2006). Within the gender binary, men start off with the 'right' gender, therefore, are more likely to be perceived to measure up to masculine entrepreneurial expectations than women (Carr, 2000). As discussed in Chapter Two's discussion on doing and undoing gender, masculinities performed through a man's body is congruent with societal expectations (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), therefore, men are permitted the luxury of invisibility and all that is non-masculine is cast as the 'other' becoming visible (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; b; Simpson and Lewis, 2005).

The invisibility of masculinity within entrepreneurial activities (Simpson and Lewis, 2005; Lewis, 2006) has enabled 'entrepreneur' and 'man' to become interchangeable terms (Ahl, 2002; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; b). Many early studies even used the male pronoun (Ahl, 2006) as the dominant discourse 'think entrepreneur think male' is perpetuated (Marlow *et al.*, 2009). Women's difference from the normative conception of men and masculinity from which their behaviour is measured (Lewis, 2006; Simpson and Lewis, 2005; Mirchandani, 1999) is marked out by having the pre-fix 'female' or 'woman' in front of the word entrepreneur.

The language of masculinity commonly drawn upon to describe entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship is an important gender practice, signifying ideals and accepted understandings (Martin, 2006). Through the perpetuation of gendered language within entrepreneurship women are "portrayed as the interloper" (Shaw *et al.*, 2009: 28) within the field. This is similar to Gherardi's (1994) description of women as travellers within senior management in organisations as they are seen as trespassers in a foreign land.

Gendered understandings of entrepreneurship research fail to differentiate socially perceived sex category and gender behaviour whilst acknowledging the relationship between them. As Messerschmidt (2009: 88) argues studies on gender must acknowledge how "both sex category and gender behaviour are socially constructed in and through the body". As previously highlighted in Section 2.3.2, the body cannot be ignored when considering gender; it is enmeshed in the doing and negating of gender (Messerschmidt, 2009).

Lee-Gosselin and Grise (1990) highlight that women challenge conventional understandings of entrepreneurship through their embodied difference. Women who demonstrate socially perceived masculine behaviour jolt others assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) of what is perceived as socially acceptable behaviour performed through a woman's body (Mavin and Grandy 2010). This creates social role incongruity (Eagly and Karau, 2002) as women behaving in a masculine way go against the gender social order and are devalued (Messerschmidt, 2009) as they *undo* gender (Jeanes, 2007; Risman, 2009). It is in the *undoing* of gender, that Risman (2009) calls for a greater discussion of women's experiences and how they construct their lives rather "than inventing a label for a kind of femininity that includes the traits and behaviours previously restricted to boys and men" (Risman, 2009: 82) which this thesis will explore.

Whilst Bem's (1981) study is a seminal piece within studies of gender, the women in leadership field has developed and updated understandings of masculinity and femininity, for example Eagly and Carli's (2007) agentic and communal framework. The female entrepreneurship field could progress further by opening up to, and drawing upon these developments of the women in leadership field.

With the given understanding of male alignment to masculinity and entrepreneurship within the gender binary, a significant number of comparative studies have emerged. In identifying women's similarities, and more importantly their differences to men within entrepreneurship it is hoped that such studies will support women's perceived lack to align them with the masculine discourse of entrepreneurship.

3.2.2 Comparative Studies: Essentialising Women Entrepreneurs

Similar to the women in leadership literature, there is a predominance of sex comparison studies within female entrepreneurship research (Marlow *et al.*, 2009), measuring psychological, trait and behavioural differences (Ahl, 2006; de Bruin *et al.*, 2007) which tend to focus upon the different motivations and challenges (Simpson and Lewis, 2005) between men and women entrepreneurs, through surveys and interviews (Mirchandani, 1999). Comparative studies produce descriptive frames of reference of 'entrepreneur' and 'entrepreneurship' (de Bruin *et al.*, 2007) ensuring masculine understandings of 'entrepreneur' and 'entrepreneurship' remain unchallenged, perpetuating the gendered nature of the field (Mirchandani, 1999).

Between 1982-2000, 62% of female entrepreneurship research were sex comparisons (Ahl, 2006). De Bruin *et al.*'s., (2007) review of the female entrepreneurship special editions of 'Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice' also highlighted a similar position with 29 of the 52 articles sex comparison studies.

In Mirchandani's (1999) review of the female entrepreneurship literature, she identified three approaches used to justify comparative studies: (1) women and men are socialised differently and consequently have different orientations; (2) women face different structural barriers; and (3) women have a distinct approach to entrepreneurship, which are discussed in turn below.

3.2.2.1 Socialisation and Orientation

The first argument, *socialisation and orientation*, highlights the extent to which women align themselves to stereotypical gender roles accepting their subordination to men and the extent of their attachment to entrepreneurial norms (economic self advancement, individualism, self reliance and a strong sense of worth ethic) (Mirchandani, 1999). This understanding aligns with Mavin and Grandy's (2010: 5) concept of doing gender well, which for women requires them to perform appropriate "feminine behaviour through a socially perceived female body". The congruence between social role expectations of appropriate gender behaviour and sex category is key to validating women's femininity (and men's masculinity)(Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

The essentialist understanding that women are feminine and plethora of sex comparison studies Simpson and Lewis (2005) argue has led to the development of a female typology of entrepreneurship such as Goffee and Scase's (1985) typology of women entrepreneurs' behaviour in relation to socialisation and entrepreneurial orientation. The typology highlighted four types of entrepreneurs; conventional, innovative, domestic and radical in relation to their gender role acceptance and their adherence to the entrepreneurship ideal (see Figure 3.2.2.1). Given the understanding of gender and masculine construction of entrepreneurship in this study, this thesis interprets Goffee and Scase's (1985) term entrepreneurial ideal as masculine and gender role acceptance as femininity. Conventional women entrepreneurs were identified as women who had a high commitment to the entrepreneurial norm and the traditional gender role, resulting in the acceptance of a long hour's culture in order to fulfil their public and private roles (Goffee and Scase, 1985). The construction of the 'conventional woman entrepreneur' portrays an image of a woman simultaneously satisfying her social role expectations as a feminine woman and, therefore, doing gender, as well as satisfying entrepreneurial expectations to be masculine – undoing gender.

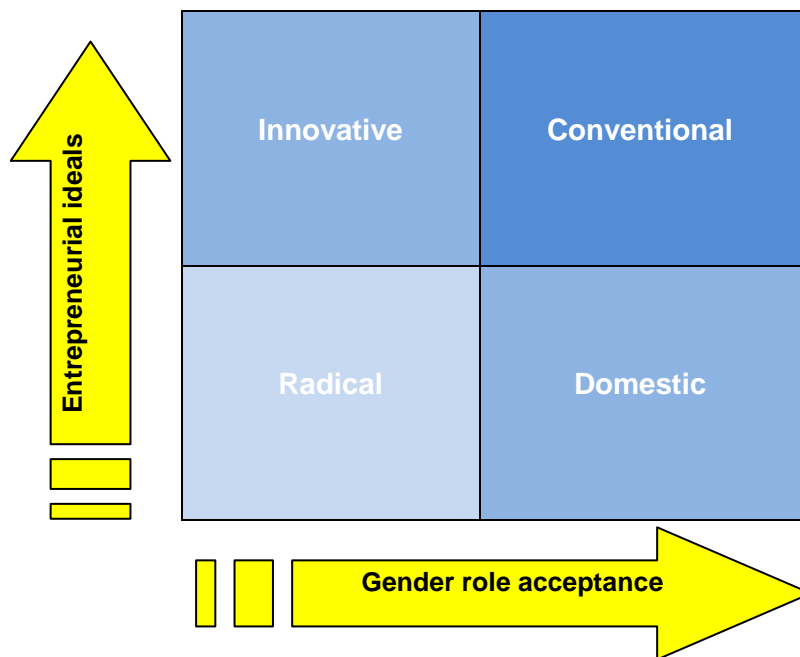


Figure 3.2.2.1 Adapted from Goffee and Scase (1985) Typology of women entrepreneurs

The typology is valuable in highlighting the extent to which women entrepreneurs adhere to or reject their gender social role expectations within the binary, acknowledging the doing and undoing of gender and consequent doing and undoing of entrepreneurship. However, the framework does not develop understandings of *how* women maintain stereotypical expectations of being a woman within the entrepreneurship context, nor whether the practice and practise of gender and entrepreneurship is done reflexively or non-reflexively (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010). In particular, the framework does not explore how women are able to satisfy both gender and entrepreneurial expectations under the 'conventional' label, as this places 'conventional' women across both symbolic spaces. As highlighted in Chapter Two, Mavin and Grandy (2010) suggest that through simultaneous and multiple enactments of femininities and masculinities creates new possibilities for the gender binary to be disrupted. However, this potential has not been explored through Goffee and Scases (1985) 'conventional woman entrepreneur' label.

The focus on socialisation and orientation fails highlight how patriarchal structures which support, perpetuate and create sex differences along gendered lines. Furthermore it also neglects to consider both women entrepreneurs' and their followers' agency and ignoring their subjectivities

3.2.2.2 Structural Barriers

Mirchandani's (1999) second comparative study approach is based upon the premise that women face greater *structural barriers* (Simpson and Lewis, 2005), highlighting the disadvantages women endure in comparison to men when starting and running a business e.g. reduced access to finance, lack of industry experience, familial responsibilities, size and sectoral location of the business (Graham, 2005; Marlow and Patton, 2005; Shaw *et al.*, 2001; Brush, 1997). Whilst noting these issues has been important in highlighting the issues women face as they enter entrepreneurship, they are symptoms of gendered societal and institutional structures of patriarchal culture.

Comparative studies focused on structural barriers continue to support sex defined symptoms of gendered societies and institutions (Mirchandani, 1999) labelling such barriers *women's* problems rather than symptoms of patriarchal structures (Walby, 1989). Such structures require further exploration to deconstruct the gendered organising that has resulted in women being placed in a disadvantaged position within entrepreneurship.

From a liberal feminist perspective removal of such barriers would alleviate women's entrepreneurial disadvantage enabling them to achieve "honourable man status" (Marlow and Patton, 2005: 722) through a discourse of individualism (Ahl, 2006). However, suggesting removal of barriers through individual action lacks theoretical grounding from a feminist perspective (Brush, 1992), ignoring historical, cultural and societal influences (Chell and Baines, 1998) of a patriarchal backcloth. As a result the power perspective implicit within such established structures is rendered invisible (Mirchandani, 1999; Ogbor, 2000) creating the perception that women have the power to liberate themselves from structural barriers through training, education and align themselves with appropriate networks (Mirchandani, 1999) emphasising the need for them to become something different. Removal of such barriers will not lead to greater numbers of women entrepreneurs (de Bruin *et al.*, 2007), as it fails to address the gendered nature of entrepreneurship.

3.2.2.3 A Female Model of Entrepreneurship

The third comparative approach highlighted by Mirchandani (1999), is developing a female model of entrepreneurship as an alternative to the dominant male version, based on the essentialist premise that women have a unique way of doing business because of their domestic responsibilities. For example 'women', as a category, are said to be motivated to enter entrepreneurship in a quest for greater control and balance between their business, family and social roles (Lee-Gosselin and Grise, 1990; Orhan and Scott, 2001; Mattis, 2004; Winn, 2004). Entrepreneurship is, therefore, deemed to be an accommodating strategy for women (Marlow and Strange, 1994) enabling them the flexibility to meet domestic demands whilst also sustaining a professional position.

This gendered assumption of women's need for flexibility for family responsibilities is challenged by Cromie's (1987) study of women's and men's motivations for starting a business, which highlighted the diversity *within* the sexes in relation to start-up motivations. Women's motivations to enter entrepreneurship are multifaceted and a complex combination of desires for independence and control, domestic and personal circumstances and gendered organisational culture (Patterson and Mavin, 2009).

Lewis (2009) contends that the widely held assumption that women's key motivation for engaging in entrepreneurial activity is to gain balance and support childcare responsibilities, should be questioned and further research should focus on the differences and divisions of women's motivations. Consolidating women's diverse experiences into a category that represents all women, fails to capture women's subjectivities, ignoring the 'messy' real life realities of women entrepreneurs (de Bruin *et al.*, 2007).

Furthermore, Chaganti's (1986) framework of women's leadership drawn upon within the female entrepreneurship literature highlights how creating a feminine archetype fails to disrupt the gender social order (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Chaganti (1986) offers two kinds of leadership: feminine entrepreneur – women run their businesses in a way distinct to that of men; and the successful entrepreneur whereby women run their business in a similar way to men entrepreneurs. The use of language to label the two approaches; feminine and successful, perpetuates the gender binary (Mirchandani, 1999), aligning masculinity and men with success, and femininity and women as ineffectual (Mavin, 2009a). The gendered social order, therefore, remains intact as the masculine is valorised within this framework.

Comparative studies focusing upon descriptive differences of female and male entrepreneurs to establish an archetype profile of a woman entrepreneur (Mirchandani, 1999) or 'entrepreneuse' (Skinner, 1987) to rival 'entrepreneur' has not been empirically or theoretically developed. Drawing upon the women in leadership theory base, a feminine form of leadership was discussed in Chapter Two (see section 2.5.2) which highlighted how such essentialist understanding perpetuates the gender binary rather than trying to disrupt it. To develop a feminine form of entrepreneurship as previously explored in the women in leadership research, would create an "Other" way of *doing* entrepreneurship for women as it fails to challenge the accepted masculine norm and instead works within the binary in an attempt to usurp the social order by focusing upon their difference (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004).

A discourse of women's difference valorises the skills and attributes which are sex-role stereotyped to women (Lewis, 2009), highlighting the unique contribution they make to entrepreneurship (Simpson and Lewis, 2007).

The three approaches Mirchandani's (1999) suggests are drawn upon to justify comparative studies (socialisation and orientation, structural barriers and female model of entrepreneurship) either essentialise women and treat them as different, or propose that the barriers in place can be overcome through individual action positioning the issue as women's problem rather than a wider socio-cultural issue. Both understandings work within the gender binary and reproduce gendered understandings which invariably shape experiences of gender within entrepreneurship. Consequently, it is imperative to be aware of such understandings from a gender perspective to support answering the research question that guides this thesis 'leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?'.

3.2.3 Moving Beyond Comparisons

Comparative studies capture *the* way that women do business, prioritising sex over other categories, with differences within sexes and over time and space (Ahl, 2006), under emphasised (Mirchandani, 1999). The domestic division of labour, located within the symbolic universe of the feminine, has assisted in characterising women as a homogenous group (Mirchandani, 1999) assuming that all women are driven by a narrow set of family concerns (Lewis, 2009). Whilst contemporary studies are beginning to acknowledge women's changing career motivations over time, (e.g. Mainiero and Sullivan's (2006) Kaleidoscope Career Model), they still deny diversity between women.

Sex comparison studies have focused on deriving sex specific personal attributes (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009) to emphasise the assumption that women and men entrepreneurs are essentially different (Ahl, 2006). The results place emphasis on the entrepreneurial gaps and inadequacies of women entrepreneurs in relation to personality, motivation, access to resources, skills and barriers to success (Mirchandani, 1999; Simpson and Lewis, 2005). When the perceived inadequacies (outlined below in Table 3.2.2.4) are tested they reproduce the gendered nature of entrepreneurship and entrepreneur continuing to position women as less entrepreneurial and inadequate in relation to men (Ahl, 2006). Women are labelled underperformers (DuRietz and Henrekson, 2000), and deemed to enter entrepreneurship with shortfalls and inadequacies (Ahl, 2006). However, a study by Watson (2002) illustrates that given the same financial input and level of work, both sexes performed in similar ways. Women do not lack the desired skills and attributes to be entrepreneurial, but structural barriers (Marlow *et al.*, 2009) prohibit their perceived acceptance and effectiveness.

Ahl (2006) criticises sex comparison studies for their overreliance on statistical significance of difference at the expense of highlighting the parallels between men and women. Differences between women are, therefore, under emphasised (Lewis, 2009) as essentialist notions are regarded more highly (Mirchandani, 1999).

Whilst sex comparison studies have served to recompense women's prolonged exclusion and lack of voice (Simpson and Lewis, 2005) within the entrepreneurship field by introducing women into studies to develop the field (Mirchandani, 1999; de Bruin *et al.*, 2007), the gendered nature of its conceptual construction is ignored (Mirchandani, 1999). De Bruin *et al.* (2007) assert that sex differences disappear in studies that keep sector and environment constant, therefore, differences within the sexes are of greater significance and require further exploration to "capture the rhythm of women's working lives" (Mallon and Cohen, 2001: 219).

Future studies must recognise and distinguish between sex category and gender behaviour to identify and understand the *(un)doing* of gender (Messerschmidt, 2009) of women entrepreneurs. The continuation of comparative studies simply produces 'dead end themes' (de Bruin *et al.*, 2007) which fail to explore *how* concepts came to be constructed and understood on masculine terms prohibiting theoretical development within the field.

Highlighted Women's Inadequacies	Research
Psychological makeup is less entrepreneurial or different from a man's	Fagenson, 1993; Neider, 1987; Sexton and Bowan-Upton, 1990; Zapalska, 1997
Less motivation for entrepreneurship or for growth of their business	Buttner and Moore, 1997; Fischer <i>et al.</i> , 1997
Insufficient education or experience	Boden and Nucci, 2000
Less desire to start a business	Carter and Allen, 1997; Kourilsky and Walstad, 1998; Matthews and Moser, 1996; Scherer <i>et al.</i> , 1990
Being risk averse	Masters and Meier, 1988
Experiencing unique start-up difficulties or training needs	Birley <i>et al.</i> , 1987; Nelson, 1987; Pellegrino and Reece, 1982
Using less than optimal or perhaps 'feminine' management practices or strategies	Carter <i>et al.</i> , 1997; Chaganti, 1986; Cuba <i>et al.</i> , 1983; Olson and Currie, 1992; Van Auken <i>et al.</i> , 1994
Behaving irrationally by turning to unqualified family members for help	Nelson, 1989
Not networking optimally	Aldrich <i>et al.</i> , 1989; Cromie and Birley, 1992; Katz and Williams, 1997; Smeltzer and Fann, 1989
Perceiving other women as less cut for the role of entrepreneurship	Fagenson and Marcus, 1991
Attributing loan denials to gender bias instead of flaws in the business plan	Buttner and Rosen, 1992

Table 3.2.2.4 Outline of comparative studies highlighting women's perceived inadequacies adapted from Ahl, H. (2006) "Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions" *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30(5), pp: 595-621.

“Women are cast as ‘the other’ of men....cast as secondary, as a complement or, at best, as an unused resource” (Ahl, 2006: 604). The male norm remains unchallenged and the gender binary and social order remains intact as the field works within the boundaries of the symbolic universe of meaning without challenge.

In parallel to the women in leadership literature discussed in Chapter Two, the need to move beyond comparative studies that reproduce the gender binary to explore women entrepreneurs’ experiences of gender is important to challenge and question the binary. Furthermore, comparative studies focus upon the individual entrepreneur rather than entrepreneurship as a process. This individualistic treatment neglects to consider others’ interpretations of women entrepreneurs’ gender behaviour in relation to her socially perceived sex category (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010) highlighted as essential considerations within the doing and undoing gender theory base. Progress has been made in recent years within female entrepreneurship research as gender is recognised to be intertwined within entrepreneurship which is discussed in the next section.

3.3 Gender and Entrepreneurship: An Intertwined Practice

Contemporary studies exploring gender within entrepreneurship recognise that gender is not a discrete element that can be extracted from entrepreneurship, but forms intertwined practices and processes (Fenwick, 2002; Brush *et al.*, 2009; Bruni *et al.* 2004a; b; Ahl, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Simpson and Lewis, 2005). Consequently, drawing upon gender as a research lens is appropriate in this thesis to challenge and make visible the dominant masculine construction of entrepreneurship which has been concealed (Simpson and Lewis, 2005). This section, therefore, explores the findings of some studies which highlight and explore the complexity of women entrepreneurs’ experiences of their social role incongruity within a gender binary.

Bruni *et al.*’s (2004a) ethnographic study of two small businesses in Italy perceived to be alternative models to the masculine norm, a business operated by two sisters and a gay magazine led by a gay man, are drawn upon to explore experiences of ‘doing gender’ and ‘doing entrepreneurship’. Whether individuals consciously choose to enact a ‘gender display’ doing entrepreneurship involves a gender positioning (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a), which they cannot prevent others from viewing and interpreting in gendered terms (Lewis, 2006). Therefore, despite the fact that women and men may not consciously take up gender as an active identity, they cannot escape it (Young, 1994; Lewis, 2004).

Gender is infused within everyday lives (Martin, 2006), shaping individual choices and experiences as well as others interpretations of their behaviour. Consequently, Lewis (2006) asserts individuals do not have a choice as to whether they are being identified and interpreted in gender terms, Bruni *et al.*'s (2004a) contend that performing entrepreneurship always involves as gender positioning.

Bruni *et al.*'s (2004a) study offers five processes (see Table 3.3) that position people as 'men' and 'women' within entrepreneurial practices and as 'entrepreneurs' within gender practices, and one metaphor that provides a summary image of 'doing gender' and 'doing entrepreneurship' as an intertwined practice of the symbolic spaces.

Process	Description
1. Managing the dual presence	Gender and entrepreneurship are performed by constantly shuttling between the dichotomous symbolic spaces
2. Ceremonial and remedial work	Crossing negating symbolic boundaries with ceremonial work and when boundaries must be established remedial work.
3. Boundary keeping	Assertion of different symbolic spaces and their defence
4. Footing	Enables individuals to adjust their stance in particular frames and provides occasions for them to disrupt its referents
5. Gender commodification	A process which acted reflexively on everyday organisational practices. The symbolic spaces of men and women were a production factor to be allocated in the most efficient manner – i.e. Gender commodification means the exploitation of the symbolic space of gender as terrain on which to (re)construct market relations

Table 3.3 Five processes of entrepreneurship adapted from Bruni *et al.*, (2004a) "Doing gender, doing entrepreneurship: An ethnographic account of intertwined practices", *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11(4), pp: 406-429.

Findings further highlight the positive "equation between entrepreneurship and masculinity" (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a: 425) as entrepreneurship roles are aligned with masculine expectations. Bruni *et al.*, (2004a) noted that in some instances the entrepreneurs made explicit 'performances' to align their behaviours with entrepreneurial expectations, signifying their agency in the *(un)doing* of gender (Deutsch, 2007) and contextual sensitivity (Lewis, 2009).

The five processes work as follows; process 1, managing the dual presence where the two symbolic spaces of home (private) and business (public) merge. Making a distinction between the spaces becomes difficult as individuals shuttle between the spaces as boundaries become blurred. The sisters within Bruni *et al.*'s, (2004a) case, refused to view themselves as entrepreneurs and preferred to refer to themselves as 'dis-entrepreneurs', which Bruni *et al.*, (2004) highlight as the significance entrepreneurship holds within their private, rather than public, lives and draws upon a discourse of difference (Lewis, 2009). However, Bruni *et al.*, (2004a) further contend that individuals may establish or re-establish an order, prohibiting a dual presence, by engaging in remedial and ceremonial work (Gherardi, 1994).

Bruni *et al.*, (2004a) argue that this prevents a boundary breach which they label as process 2: ceremonial and remedial work. This process highlights individuals' agency in the (un)doing of gender (Deutsch, 2007) but does not draw out the reflexive and non-reflexivity of their practices and practises (Martin, 2006; Czarniska, 2006; Nencel, 2010).

Process 3, boundary keeping, is the defence of one's own symbolic space as individuals attempt to forge alliances with the other occupants of their space to preserve the advantages of the space to trespassers (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a). However, footing (process 4) enables the symbolic space to become open and receptive to new practices or participants and, therefore, reset parameters of belonging. Bruni *et al.*'s (2004a) five gender process framework, (see Table 3.3) provides female entrepreneurship research with gender analysis of women's experiences of managing the social order, progressing from previous essentialist understandings.

The five processes highlight the double responsibility placed on women as they contend with expectations across the symbolic universe of meaning. Women must manage their dual presence between the private, family sphere as part of their gender social role expectation, whilst also conforming to entrepreneurial expectations. Furthermore, the double responsibility placed on women highlights how they are unable to compete on equal terms with men as the binary does not place expectations of family responsibilities on the shoulders of men, but continues to view it as women's primary concern, above their entrepreneurial responsibility (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a).

Brush (1992) and Buttner (2001) view the family as a means of motivation and inspiration which drives women's entrepreneurial activities through the skills they have accrued and should not be viewed as problematic. However, familial roles and responsibilities lack value within the gender binary which dictates such roles as secondary within the gender social order. Furthermore, reflecting upon the patriarchal backcloth of this thesis, the family site can be a source of motivation and oppression, dependent upon women's ethnicity (Walby, 1989). For white women the family is a key site of women's oppression, but for women of colour, "family is a site of resistance and solidarity" (Walby, 1989: 217). This highlights the complexity of the family site for each woman, a complexity which cannot be essentialised to women in general.

This issue further highlights the need to disrupt the gender social order to break free from the constraints that the binary places on women, to enable men and women to take on family responsibilities, supported equally through institutional practices. Current practice does not permit this understanding, therefore, women entrepreneurs have had to work within the given (Mavin, 2009b) working to eradicate their difference from men, as discussed in the women in leadership literature highlighted in Chapter 2 section 2.4.1.

The next section moves to discuss the practice of silence that women draw upon to conceal their difference and their alignment to individualized consideration based on meritocracy to 'keep gender out' (Lewis, 2006).

3.4 Concealing to Advance: The Rise of Meritocracy

Whilst contemporary academic theorising of female entrepreneurship acknowledges the centrality of gender within entrepreneurship, Lewis' (2006) study suggests that women entrepreneurs refute claims that gender is relevant to their experiences of entrepreneurship (Lewis, 2006) and prefer to draw upon an understanding of meritocracy. Meritocracy is an understanding that career success is available to all based on objective criteria of personal input and effort (Lewis, 2006). Kumra's (2010) understanding of meritocracy draws upon Kanter's (1977) concept of homosocial reproduction to highlight that "those who are successful in the future [are] similar in profile to those who have been successful in the past" (Kumra, 2010: 13) – masculine men. Any "deviance from the benchmark precludes merit to be recognised and valued, and hence becomes invisible" (Kumra, 2010: 14).

From a liberal feminist perspective, if gender was no longer a barrier, women should be able to access the same opportunities open to men (Ahl, 2006; Marlow and Patton, 2005), should they be willing to take them. However, this is not evident for female entrepreneurship within the UK (see for example Harding, 2007a; Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2004; 2006; Department for Trade and Industry, 2003)

Women prefer to understand that the problem of gender disadvantage has been answered, and whilst “appearing to be progressive, conceals women’s continued disadvantage, neutralising gendered experiences which privilege the masculine” through its continued invisibility (Lewis, 2006: 453). There is considerable support for the belief that the issue of gender disadvantage has been resolved (Maier, 1999; Scully, 2003; Lewis, 2006) and that merit is based upon objective and rational measures (Kumra, 2010). However, as Kumra (2010) highlights the construction of merit is gendered, rewarding those who perform appropriate masculine behaviour - and this thesis adds – through a socially perceived male body, therefore, doing gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). This continued gender blindness suggests that women’s continued inequalities are a consequence of their individual lack of motivation to take advantage of the opportunities presented, absolving the privileged group of any responsibility (Lewis, 2004).

In Lewis’ (2006) study of an online network for women entrepreneurs and women with corporate careers in service based sectors, she explored how women adjust and present themselves within the sphere of business ownership. The study revealed a division between women, who deny the importance of gender in understanding experiences of entrepreneurship, with the belief in a gender neutral system, drawing upon a discourse of professionalism; and those women who do not conform and live up to masculine expectations of entrepreneurship, drawing upon a discourse of difference.

Women who draw upon a discourse of professionalism advocate gender blindness, masking entrepreneurship’s gendered nature (Lewis, 2006). Lewis (2006) contends that these women are angered by other women who draw upon a discourse of difference (Lewis, 2009), which she argues is due to their awareness of the potential harm to the wider population of women entrepreneurs by perpetuating their devalued position within the gender binary. Women whose behaviour deviates from the masculine norm (Kumra, 2010), or are perceived to highlight issues of gender, risk being interpreted by others as non-serious, non-entrepreneurial and illegitimate (Lewis, 2006).

It is unsurprising that women adopt or align their behaviour to strategies based on meritocracy and individualism, when the price of speaking out at best leaves colleagues impatient and unwilling to deal with them, or at worst questioning their capability (Lewis, 2006). Women instead prefer to draw upon an emerging discourse of professionalism from which women legitimise their behaviour (Lewis, 2009).

Professionalism is “historically embedded in cultural notions of masculinity” (Lewis, 2009:6). Attributes describing professionalism such as “detached, calm, committed, autonomous, objective and rational are associated with men and the masculine” (Lewis, 2009: 6). Consequently, women must work within the given (Mavin, 2009b), denying gender within entrepreneurship by actively keeping gender out in order to remain ‘professional’, and avoid being labelled as incompetent to evade alienation from others within the organisation. As previously highlighted, whilst women *do* entrepreneurship, they undo gender as their behaviour which is perceived to be successful in entrepreneurial (masculine) terms, reproducing and reaffirming the field’s gendered nature (Lewis, 2006), it contradicts their social role expectations as a woman.

De Bruin *et al.*, (2007) highlight the significance of gender for women within entrepreneurship in relation to others’ perceptions of business performance and consequent credibility. They problematise women entrepreneurs gaining ‘entrepreneurial legitimacy’ as their gender social role expectations as women are at odds with the male norm of an entrepreneur (Mirchandani, 1999; Ahl, 2006; Lewis, 2006, Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; b), mirroring understandings of gender social role theory (Eagly 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) discussed within the women in leadership literature.

Whether women, naturally or consciously, make a decision to behave in a masculine way, they will always remain “blemished men” (Marlow, 2002: 83), as their behaviour jolts our assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) of their social role expectations. Marlow, Henry and Carter, (2009: 141) highlight that the “lack of progress within the equal opportunities project has demonstrated” that women taking on an ‘honorary man’ status is improbable within the current socio-economic setting and providing gendered analysis continues “our comprehension of the experience of femaleness and self-employment will only be partial” (Marlow, 2002: 83).

Whilst Lewis' (2006) study provides an understanding of women entrepreneurs' experiences of gender, discourses professionalism (women undo gender) and difference (women do gender) creates another binary which does not permit simultaneous enactments of masculinity and femininity (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Further studies are required to remap experiences of gender differently (Kelan, 2010) which challenge binary thinking.

From a liberal perspective, both meritocracy and individualism (discussed in Chapter Two, see section 2.5.1.2) refute claims of gender, neutralising understandings by preventing people from attributing their experiences to "collectively experienced barriers" (Kelan, 2008:435). Individualism is understood to be individuals' free choice and control over both their personal and professional lives (Kelan, 2008) with opportunities for both success and failure open to them. Merit, therefore, enables people to exercise their individualism with the opportunity for assessment based upon objective criteria of personal input and effort (Kumra, 2010; Lewis, 2006). However, as discussed within this section, the social construction of merit is gendered as the profile of individuals who have been successful in the past determines the profile for those who are successful in the future within any deviance from this norm is overlooked, devalued and invisible (Kumra, 2010).

Ahl (2006) argues that individualism as a discursive practice remains under theorised. It neglects contextual, historical and socio-cultural influences (Chell and Baines, 1998) to reassert individual women's achievements in an equal environment, suppressing gender and its essentialist association with 'women' as a category, deemed to be non-serious entrepreneurs (Lewis, 2006). This prohibits social and political progression as masculine hierarchical superiority is sustained (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) and continually bestows the luxury of invisibility (Lewis, 2006) as gender social order is neglected (Ahl, 2006). Ahl (2006) asserts that discussions on how this order could be disrupted is scarcely addressed. Liberal feminist views overlook the deep rooted gendered nature of entrepreneurship as social feminists undermine such views suggesting that the likelihood of women making the same decisions as men is doubtful (Ahl, 2006).

Lewis' (2009) study, exploring the authentic identities of women entrepreneurs, emphasises the importance of contextual sensitivity highlighting the influence of others, which the discourse of individualism negates. Lewis (2009:1) understands authenticity as a "commitment to self-values (Erickson, 1995) or 'the extent to which one is behaving according to what one considers to be their true or genuine self – who one 'is' as a person' (Ashforth and Tomiuk, 2000)". Lewis (2009: 1) suggests that members of oppressed groups are "more likely to experience predicaments which require them to choose between, behaving in a manner which concurs with their self values, or behaving according to the demands and requirements of powerful others" (Erickson, 1995).

Furthermore, whilst Lewis (2009) recognises that women may not perceive themselves to be in a disadvantaged group, they remain a minority within the context of entrepreneurship (Lewis, 2006; Simpson and Lewis, 2005). Lewis (2009) contends that women entrepreneurs draw upon a feminised discourse of difference which she suggests "is real to them" (Lewis, 2009: 2) as well as a discourse of professionalism in search of a situated authenticity. She contends that by drawing upon authenticity we can begin to identify and understand women's agency and "why some women go against the main discursive practices of the discourse of enterprise" (Lewis, 2009: 12) which result in them being labelled as "failed entrepreneurs" (Lewis, 2009: 12). Lewis (2009), therefore, offers authenticity as a useful concept to explore and expand understandings of women's entrepreneurial experiences (Lewis, 2009). For this thesis, exploring the doing, undoing of gender (Deutsch, 2007) and how gender is done well and differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) through authenticity will provide new insights into experiences of gender in female entrepreneurship.

Some studies have identified the need for future research to focus on contextual and institutional structure in order to expose the gendered power differentials (Ahl, 2006) e.g. Birley, 1989; Chell and Baines, 1998; Goffee and Scase, 1985; Rosa and Hamilton, 1994. However, their requests have failed to be acknowledged (with the exception of Lewis, 2009) in the mainstream as the academy's gendered practices marginalise such research.

Scholars are, therefore, faced with a similar dilemma as the women entrepreneurs themselves: fit in with masculine constructions of good research practice to increase publication opportunities (de Bruin *et al.*, 2007) or be something else and risk your work being marginalised, lacking academic credibility within the 'malestream' and consequently devalued. However, given the research question of this thesis aims to explore how gender is experienced within entrepreneurial leadership in small firms, exploring how gender is done, undone, done well and differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) a feminist perspective would be appropriate which is considered in the next section.

3.5 The Need for a Feminist Perspective within Entrepreneurship

The dominant discourse of masculinity from entrepreneurship's economic roots has resulted in a prevalence of objective statistical techniques, which do not convey the 'messy', real life situation of entrepreneurship (de Bruin *et al.*, 2007). Despite gender research being studied within the entrepreneurship and small business field over the past 30 years, women are still less likely to start-up in business than men (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2006). Consequently, extant female entrepreneurship literature has failed to explore the gendered nature of entrepreneurship. It therefore, remains an 'enduring area' with longevity in relation to empirical and theoretical developments (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009) to deconstruct the gender social order to be able to 'unlearn' and 'rethink' (Mavin *et al.*, 2004) previous approaches.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to suggest that economic objectivist studies are not valuable, as the emphasis on growth was a key contributor to women's initial inclusion within entrepreneurship studies. However, there has been an overreliance on economic growth which has driven public policy e.g. Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2006). The aim is to outline that this approach is not the only legitimate source of knowledge generation to provide understandings of women's experiences of entrepreneurship.

The section will firstly explore the economic influence, the potential in taking a feminist approach in studies of entrepreneurship, before considering how a feminist approach could be taken forward within this study to explore the intersection of entrepreneurship and leadership.

3.5.1 Economic Influence

Economists (e.g. Knights, 1933; Schumpeter, 1934; Kroner, 1978) have significantly shaped the discourse of entrepreneurship and small business research (Hérbert and Link, 1988; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a), with contemporary studies still driven by an economic logic (Fenwick, 2002). Schumpeter's (1934) seminal work is still deemed to be one of the most significant contributions (Goss, 2005), remaining the most frequently cited theorist within the field (Goss, 2005; Ahl, 2006). Consequently, studies of entrepreneurship have predominantly focused on growth, profit, firm size (Fenwick, 2002; Patterson and Mavin, 2009), adopting the discipline's accepted objectivist ontology; gendering studies of entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006).

Women's initial inclusion within the entrepreneurship field is attributed to the economic growth rationale of women being perceived as an "untapped pool of entrepreneurial talent" (Marlow, 2006: 399; Graham, 2005) which could secure economic vibrancy in the UK (Department for Trade and Industry, 2003; Harding, 2007a). Research funding available for entrepreneurship is primarily focused on employment opportunities created within small businesses and performance issues, disregarding gender and power relations (Ahl, 2006: 609). Consequently, studies on finance and performance have dominated female entrepreneurship research (de Bruin *et al.*, 2007): 65% of female entrepreneurship research articles from 1982-2000 drew upon an economic growth rationale to justify their studies, with just 8% (Ahl, 2006) drawing upon the 'under developed' (Marlow *et al.*, 2009) gendered nature of the area.

Whilst this argument has ensured that women are firmly placed "on the enterprise map", gaining academic, practitioner and policy maker attention (Marlow *et al.*, 2009: 140), greater attention is required to explore power relations, structural and sector barriers that gender presents for women within entrepreneurship (de Bruin *et al.*, 2007).

Whilst the number of women entering entrepreneurship in the UK over the past decade has increased, the number of women owned businesses has not (Harding, 2007a; Shaw *et al.*, 2007). Shaw *et al.* (2007), suggest this is attributable to women's susceptibility to higher exit rates, with the resulting assumption, particularly by policy makers, that women's businesses are less sustainable. However, within the masculine economic construction of entrepreneurship (de Bruin *et al.*, 2007), high exit rates and non-growth orientation is deemed to be non-entrepreneurial, labelled inferior, devalued, (Lewis, 2006) positioned as women's problem (Ahl, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Lee-Gosselin and Grise, 1990) rather than a wider socio-cultural structural problem (de Bruin *et al.*, 2007).

Despite both women and men entrepreneurs being orientated to start and run small businesses, essentialist understandings highlighting women's perceived 'lack' (Höpfl and Matila, 2007) through underperformance, enable men "to be free riders on their few growth orientated fellow businessmen...while the women are marked out as non-growers" (Ahl, 2002: 58). Ahl (2006) highlights that statistical research favours difference over non-difference, perpetuating essentialist notions of entrepreneurship.

The pragmatic focus on growth and performance in combination with other discursive practices (the male norm, the individualist focus, objectivist ontology, assumptions of gender differences, the private/public divide, and theories and methods congruent with this) serve to both shape and restrain the research questions and contribute to the positioning of women as secondary.

(Ahl, 2006: 609)

Consequently, the simple inclusion of women within entrepreneurship studies has failed to challenge the gendered understandings of entrepreneur and entrepreneurship (Mirchandani, 1999). Further research is required focusing upon issues of longer sustainability of women entrepreneurs and their businesses (Harding, 2007a), as the economic, masculine rationale has enabled the continuation of the implementation of male gendered instruments (Brush, 1992). Lewis (2009: 3) further contends that "patriarchy infuses enterprise discourse and practice" to such an extent that entrepreneurial theorising has enabled gender to remain invisible as masculinity has become so deeply embedded within entrepreneurial activities (Lewis, 2006; Simpson and Lewis, 2005). "A shift in thought is necessary" (Ahl, 2006: 612) for future studies of female entrepreneurship to prevent "the male entrepreneurial model [being] universalised and stripped of gender" (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a: 410).

Furthermore, entrepreneurship research should be framed by an academic perspective rather than policy, to increase the quality base and establish the academic rigour the field currently lacks through theoretical underpinnings and greater awareness of how scholar's ontological and epistemological assumptions shape research (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009).

3.5.2 Taking a Feminist Perspective

Incorporating feminist analysis into the entrepreneurship literature has been called upon (e.g. Hurley, 1999; de Bruin et al., 2007) in recent times. Despite Bennett and Dann's (2000) alignment of feminism alongside economic and psychological approaches within entrepreneurship, feminist entrepreneurship research remains an underdeveloped area (Mirchandani, 1999; Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009).

Many entrepreneurship studies fail to distinguish between sex category and gender behaviour (Messerschmidt, 2009), relying upon an understanding of gender as biologically determined. Continually failing to make this distinction, gendered understandings are perpetuated, enabling masculine hierarchical superiority to flourish as the norm within entrepreneurship, sustaining femininity and women as the 'Other' in second place within the social order (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Such essentialist constructions of female entrepreneurship sustain an understanding that notions of women and men exist, and that they can be objectively measured (Ahl, 2006), neglecting the contextual sensitivity of women's lives (de Bruin et al., 2007; Lewis, 2009):

by focusing on gender as an individual characteristic rather than as something socially and culturally constructed that varies in time and space, the research tends to overlook structural factors and proposes that women have shortcomings.

(Ahl, 2006: 609)

Ahl (2006) aligns with Mirchandani's (1999) assertion that future research on women entrepreneurs must avoid building on previous gendered research. Taking a feminist approach offers the potential to expose gendered practice, to further theoretical insights within entrepreneurship (Mirchandani, 1999) but also better support women entrepreneurs understand their entrepreneurial experiences and, in turn, how their behaviour may be interpreted by others.

For entrepreneurship to develop theoretically, a migration beyond the functionalist paradigm is required to include more qualitative and reflexive approaches (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009), exploring the concept as a cultural phenomenon (Bruni et al., 2004a; b). Blackburn and Kovalainen (2009: 132) encourage scholars to engage in reflexivity to increase understandings of how "linguistic, social, political and institutional forces come together to generate knowledge in small business and management research".

Reflexivity is of particular importance from a gender perspective in order to explore the reflexive and non-reflexive practice within (un)doing of gender (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010). From a methodological perspective an increased focus on textual analysis is required, including case study data that moves beyond a reliance on interview to more reflection and observation (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009).

Ahl (2006) offers a research agenda which does not result in the reproduction of women's subordination, but captures the richer aspects of female entrepreneurship phenomenon (see Table 3.5.2).



	Current research object	Expanded research object
Objectivist epistemology	Individualist focus and essentialist assumptions 	More factors Contingency studies Comparative studies
Constructionist epistemology	Studies of how women entrepreneurs construct their lives and their businesses, how they 'do gender' 	Studies of how social orders are gendered and of the mechanisms by which this gendering is reconstructed

Table 3.5.2 Female entrepreneurship research agenda taken from Ahl, H. (2006) "Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions" *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30(5), pp: 595-621.

Ahl's (2006) research agenda for female entrepreneurship research (see table 3.5.2) does not suggest that scholars should discard objectivist epistemology but should instead examine issues beyond the individual i.e. legislation, family policy. Cross country comparative studies are also outlined in order to evade the risk of not questioning cultural norms. However, within the context of this thesis, understanding gender as a social construction (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; Jackson and Scott, 2002; Lorber and Farrell, 1991) is central.

Drawing upon Ahl's (2006) constructionist approach it is imperative to avoid essentialist reproductions to progress studies of gender exploring *how* individuals experience gender in their everyday lives (Marlow *et al.*, 2009), to explorations of the gendering of institutional orders and *how* gender is produced and reproduced within the entrepreneurial process. Greater attention should be given to explore a public discourse of women entrepreneurs and its implications (Ahl, 2006).

Exploring entrepreneurship from a feminist perspective will further insights into the gendered nature of entrepreneurship, highlighting how gender is done and undone and, in turn, how this is interpreted through a socially perceived woman's body by others (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010). It is through such explorations that Mavin and Grandy (2010) argue that simultaneous and multiple enactments of masculinities and femininities can be identified, providing opportunities to unsettle the gender binary. Future research on women entrepreneurs should focus on the doing and undoing of gender to explore how private and public spaces become blurred (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a).

Taking a feminist standpoint in this thesis will progress extant gendered understandings of entrepreneurship, enabling women to contextualise their lives (Nicolson, 1996) within their situated knowledge (Naples, 2007).

3.5.3 Moving Female entrepreneurship Forward: Considerations for Feminist Scholars

A number of parallels between the women in leadership and female entrepreneurship literature have been highlighted throughout the above discussion. Both fields are constructed upon masculine terms as women learn to become entrepreneurs and leaders against a masculine backdrop (Bryans and Mavin, 2003). Both women entrepreneurs and women leaders work to eradicate their perceived gender (Hekman, 1997; Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) working within the given (Mavin, 2009b) gender dualism in order to gain legitimacy within their leadership or entrepreneurial roles. In both areas, scholars have highlighted at a conceptual level, the need to disrupt masculine hierarchical superiority (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) to break free from the gendered social role expectations that constrain women (and men) within the binary and make women (and men) prisoners of gender (Gherardi, 1994). It is, therefore, well placed for the entrepreneurship and leadership literatures to learn from progression in both fields, understanding that along with gender, entrepreneurship and leadership are intertwined practices. The section that follows explores the arguments for converging entrepreneurship and leadership fields.

3.6 Converging Leadership and Entrepreneurship

This section begins by outlining the key arguments drawn upon within the literature which justify the separate treatment of entrepreneurship and leadership. Coglisser and Brigham's (2004) study identifies historical progressions and conceptual understandings as two key areas of overlap between the two fields. This thesis explores these key areas from a gender perspective to add to extant debates.

3.6.1. Justifying their Separate Treatment

Scholars have generally treated entrepreneurship as a separate field of study from more mainstream organisational areas such as leadership (Vecchio, 2003; Coglisser and Brigham, 2004; Jensen and Luthans, 2006). Mainstream leadership studies have historically focused on large private sector organisations (Curran and Blackburn, 2001) with little attention given to entrepreneurs as leaders (Jensen and Luthans, 2006). Kempster and Cope's (2010) study exploring the nature of leadership learning in an entrepreneurial context, highlight that leadership patterns and relationship are unique to the entrepreneurial context. As highlighted by Dandridge (1979), small firms are not simply smaller versions of large organisations, just as small children are not the same as adults; therefore, you treat both very differently. Consequently, they warrant their own studies to contextualise their leadership experiences; but not necessarily a separate field.

Entrepreneurship has also attempted to distinguish itself as a separate theory base, ignoring any interchange of ideas across fields (Blackburn and Kovalainen 2009). Blackburn and Kovalainen (2009) suggest that in order for the entrepreneurship field to develop it must begin to locate itself within more established social sciences fields. Fusing the leadership and entrepreneurship fields together and taking a gender perspective, grounded within sociology, has the potential to develop further understandings of entrepreneurship and leadership from a social science perspective.

The entrepreneurship field has typically justified its separate treatment as being attributable to the underlying assumption that entrepreneurs are 'natural leaders' (Burns, 2007) and distinctly different to individuals in employment. This has led to the assumption that the notion of entrepreneurship is an individualistic exercise (Simpson and Lewis, 2005) rather than a process, which Blackburn and Kovalainen (2009) criticise for remaining unchallenged.

Furthermore, the entrepreneurship field further defends its separate treatment by arguing that the two most closely associated elements of entrepreneurship, innovativeness and risk taking, are not as closely aligned to leadership (Jones and Crompton, 2008), even though the same attributes are being cited as desirable leadership attributes.

Despite calls to extend and overlap leadership research into the small business context from the mid 1980s (Miller and Friesen, 1984; Gartner *et al.*, 1992), leadership within entrepreneurship has been a relatively neglected area (Daily *et al.*, 2002; Jensen and Luthans, 2006; Jones and Crompton, 2008), with some relatively recent exceptions (Jones and Crompton, 2008; Chen, 2007; Jensen and Luthans, 2006; Fernald *et al.*, 2005; Coglisier and Brigham, 2004; Gupta *et al.*, 2004; Vecchio, 2003; Daily *et al.*, 2002), but none of which have analysed the nexus of leadership and entrepreneurship (Coglisier and Brigham, 2004) from a gender perspective.

Vecchio's (2003) conceptual research discusses whether the knowledge produced within the entrepreneurship field is beyond other organisational fields (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Entrepreneurship's economic and psychological roots are said to have led to its segregation (Vecchio, 2003) due to their differing foci; economics' emphasis on rationality and psychology's focus on traits and personal drives. Vecchio (2003) contends that the ambivalence from drawing upon economics and psychology as foundations to the field has encouraged the emergence of a separate field of study. However, he further asserts that extant entrepreneurship research has not provided substantial evidence to conclude that entrepreneurs are distinctly different from others and suggests, like Coglisier and Brigham (2004), that there are a number of parallels between the two fields. Both Vecchio (2003) and Coglisier and Brigham (2004) delineate a number of parallels between the two fields of study in relation to their historical progress. Both argue that the entrepreneurship field could learn from the developments and pitfalls of leadership scholars.

The leadership field is a vast and mature theory base (Hunt and Dodge, 2000) which has endured many "growing pains" (Coglisier and Brigham, 2004: 773) in order to evolve into contemporary positions which scholars and practitioners draw upon to understand leadership within the 21st century. Many leadership scholars have been criticised for suffering from 'academic amnesia' (Sayles and Steward, 1995) when embarking upon new studies, resulting in a leadership "déjà vu effect" (Hunt and Dodge, 2000: 437).

In comparison to the leadership field, the entrepreneurship field is a relatively new area of study in relation to conceptual and theoretical developments (Hunt and Dodge, 2000; Aldrich and Baker, 1997). Whilst the historical progression is not identical, there are significant similarities in the conceptual and methodological challenges entrepreneurship scholars are contending with, which have been identified as comparable to early leadership studies (Cogliser and Bringham, 2004). Cogliser and Bringham, (2004: 773) suggest that the leadership field could potentially inform the entrepreneurship field and “lessen this young field’s growing pains”. As Vecchio (2003: 322) suggests:

Perhaps, it is more cogent and parsimonious to view entrepreneurship as simply a type of leadership that occurs in a specific setting and, like many other small group manifestations of leadership (e.g., coaching sports teams, organizing volunteer workers, etc.), a type of leadership that is not beyond the reach or understanding of available theory in the areas of leadership and interpersonal influence.

The next section highlights and discusses the historical overlaps of entrepreneurship and leadership before delineating the conceptual overlaps.

3.6.2. Historical Overlaps

Cogliser and Bringham (2004) identified a historical overlap between the two fields in relation to their initial focus on traits or personality attributes which differentiate individuals as leaders or entrepreneurs (Vecchio, 2003), highlighting the gendered development within both fields. The universal legitimacy of such trait claims was quickly challenged in both fields; Stogdill (1948) in relation to leadership and Gartner (1985) in entrepreneurship for their prescriptive and limiting view. With growing criticism of the trait and personality attribute focus, both fields moved to explore a behavioural approach, albeit at different points in time, before recognising the complexities of the environment as they both began to identify with contingency theory (Cogliser and Bringham, 2004).

Cogliser and Bringham (2004) identify three key learning points that the entrepreneurship field can take heed from the more ‘mature’ leadership field (Hunt and Dodge, 2000) in order to develop and avoid the pitfalls.

Firstly, they propose further discussion of conceptual definitions of entrepreneurship to account for contexts, research samples and questions to evade definitional problems. Their second assertion emphasises the need to focus on influence and process. Leadership does not occur in a vacuum (Hunt and Dodge, 2000), but is bestowed by followers (Hunter *et al.*, 2007), therefore, follower involvement in leadership construction is imperative (Meindl, 1995).

Drawing upon the understandings of leadership and entrepreneurship as social processes within this thesis, failing to recognise follower involvement and agency as Cogliser and Brigham (2004) highlight, is critical from a gender perspective. Leadership has been shaped by the symbolic universe of masculinity (Schnurr, 2008; Eagly and Carli, 2003, 2007; Eagly, 2007; Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000; Sinclair, 1998) (see Section 2.3 for further discussion) and entrepreneurship similarly by the prevailing discourse of 'think entrepreneur think male' (Marlow *et al.*, 2009) (see Section 3.2 for further discussion). Consequently, for women to be perceived as successful leaders or entrepreneurs, they are expected to behave in masculine and agentic ways. Therefore, a further historical development overlap from a gender perspective can be added to Cogliser and Brigham's (2004) identified overlaps, as both the female entrepreneurship and women in leadership literatures focus on women's strategy to live up to the masculine ideal by eradicating their perceived feminine difference.

Much attention is given to women's strategy of eradicating their perceived difference in order to meet masculine and agentic expectations (Hekman, 1997; Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) and gain a level of acceptance from others to ascend to leadership and entrepreneurial positions. Within both the leadership and entrepreneurship literature women are called upon to become 'honorary men' (Marlow, Henry and Carter, 2009) and take on a metaphorical sex change. However, given the understanding of social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) which places feminine expectations on women, followers experience a jolt in assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) as women's feminine social role expectations are at odds with the masculine leader and entrepreneurial behaviours they display (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Furthermore, both fields fail to recognise that whilst for some women behaving in a masculine and agentic way requires a behavioural shift, for other women, behaving in a masculine way is more comfortable (Mavin, 2009a) and highlights more about the gendered expectations within the two fields.

The women in leadership literature has progressed from this initial strategy of eradication to an approach whereby feminine notions of leadership are accepted and valorised (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004), giving rise to a second coping strategy of emphasising difference (Hekman, 1997; Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). This sex role stereotyping of women to femininity essentialises women, positioning them as the new leadership ideal (Kelan, 2008). This fails to disrupt the gender social order (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004), perpetuating femininity and women as the 'Other', as they lack leadership legitimacy (Eagly, 2005). Whilst valourising notions of feminine leadership does not challenge the gender binary it does represent a step on the theoretical development journey by placing gender on the agenda for debate (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000). This strategy has not (yet) been conceptually or theoretically developed within the female entrepreneurship literature. The label of 'entrepreneuse' was initially highlighted by Skinner (1987), however, it was simply drawn upon as the French feminine for 'entrepreneur' and has not been theoretically developed or promoted as a possible challenge to the established masculine construction of the 'entrepreneur'.

The prominence of entrepreneurship sex comparative studies (Marlow *et al.*, 2009) outlining descriptive differences between the sexes could lead to the creation of an archetype profile of a woman entrepreneur (Mirchandani, 1999). Drawing upon the overlaps between the two fields, the women entrepreneur literature could learn from the pitfalls (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004) of the women in leadership literature's attempt to valorise a feminine form of leadership. Constructing an alternative feminine notion of leadership perpetuates the gender dualism (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000), as femininity simply attempts to usurp traditional masculine constructions of leadership, failing to move beyond the binary (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). However, the positive effect of placing gender on the leadership and entrepreneurship should be encouraged to enable further progressive discussions of gender within both fields.

The identified overlap of women entrepreneurs and leaders attempting to eradicate their perceived difference adds to the overlaps outlined by Cogliser and Brigham (2004) from a gender perspective. Discussing the historical progression of both the leadership and entrepreneurship fields from a gender perspective has highlighted the mistake made by the women in leadership literature in attempting to valorise a feminine form of leadership. The female entrepreneurship field should, therefore, learn from the women in leadership literature's mistake and progress without following the same pattern.

The next section moves to consider the conceptual overlaps of the entrepreneurship and leadership fields.

3.6.3 Conceptual Overlaps

Cogliser and Brigham's (2004) study extends Gartner, Bird and Starr's (1992) proposal to integrate entrepreneurship and leadership by highlighting the conceptual overlap of the fields - vision, influence, leading innovative/creative people and planning. *Vision* is an established element within the leadership field particularly in relation to charismatic, transformational, and visionary leadership but has been given less attention in the entrepreneurship field, notwithstanding its link to successful venture growth (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004; Baum *et al.*, 1998). Entrepreneurs are expected to create a vision that convinces stakeholders to follow and/or buy into a venture that may be high risk (Gupta *et al.*, 2004). Without the buy in of stakeholders entrepreneurs' visions may never be realised, highlighting the importance of others' perception within entrepreneurship or leadership. Consequently, the second identified theme *influence* is imperative within leadership and entrepreneurship to enlist the support and resources required to achieve the business objectives (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004). The third aspect, *leading innovative and creative people*, is related strongly to successful entrepreneurship, particularly in relation to idea generation but again places emphasis on others within this process. The fourth identified theme, *planning*, has been shown to positively influence high performance leadership in complex contexts.

The conceptual overlaps identified by Cogliser and Brigham (2004) between the two fields clearly emphasise the importance of others' involvement and agency. Followers decide whether or not to buy into and support the business objectives of their entrepreneur or leader's vision. Entrepreneurs' and leaders' successes are outlined as being dependent upon the idea generation of others, moving understandings of entrepreneurship and leadership beyond individualistic conceptualisations to understandings focused upon social process. As highlighted in Chapter Two, a leadership framework which recognises followers' agency, supporting the understanding of leadership as a social process, would be an appropriate framework to explore and analyse experiences of entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective.

The conceptual overlaps identified highlight the gendered foundations from which entrepreneurial leadership is developing. In recognising follower involvement and understanding entrepreneurial leadership as a social process, a gender perspective must be included to understand how women experience entrepreneurial leadership and furthermore how they are evaluated and interpreted in relation to their social role expectations.

As highlighted in Chapter Two, women and men learn to become leaders and entrepreneurs against a backcloth of patriarchy. Masculine dominance is clearly evident in the gendered language used in Cogliser and Brigham's (2004) identified conceptual overlaps. The language Cogliser and Brigham (2004) use to describe the four conceptual overlaps can be compared to Ahl's (2006) table (see Table 3.2.2a) highlighting the alignment of words of masculinity from Bem's (1981) work of psychological androgyny, with terms associated with entrepreneurship, illustrated in the table below (see Table 3.6.3).

Bem (1981) Masculinity words	Words used to describe an entrepreneur (Ahl, 2006)	Identified conceptual overlaps between leadership and entrepreneurship (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004)
Has leadership ability	Skilled at organising, visionary	Vision and planning
Dominant, aggressive	Influential, seeks power, wants a private kingdom and dynasty	Influence
Act as a leader	Leading economic and moral progress, pilot of industrialism, manager	Leading innovate/creative people

Table 3.6.3. Masculine alignment with conceptual overlaps of leadership and entrepreneurship

The table highlights the gendered foundations of entrepreneurship and leadership, identifying the need to take a gender perspective when developing the concept of entrepreneurial leadership. Ahl (2006) relates masculine connotations of 'having leadership ability' identified in Bem's masculinity and femininity index, to 'organising and vision' which can be directly related to Cogliser and Brigham's (2004) overlap of 'planning' and 'vision'. The overlap of 'influence' can also be traced through Ahl's (2006) description of entrepreneurs as 'influential', and her alignment with masculine words of 'dominant and aggressive'.

The fourth overlap of 'leading innovate/creative people' (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004) has parallels with Ahl's (2006) leading economic and moral progress, pilot of industrialism, manager which she aligns with the masculine description of 'act as a leader'. In order to be perceived as successful leaders and entrepreneurs, women must behave in masculine and agentic ways.

However, as highlighted above, this is complex for women as social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) places feminine expectations on women. Within the gender dualism, women are denied the social flux to move between the symbolic spheres of masculinity and femininity (Gherardi, 1994). Consequently, women who are perceived by followers to meet their social role expectations of femininity, lack the legitimacy or credibility to be perceived as successful within the entrepreneurial or leadership processes. Women perceived to behave in masculine and agentic ways within the entrepreneurial leadership process jolt our assumptions, creating discomfort as they challenge the given social order (Mavin, 2009b) resulting in a paradox (Hearn, 1998).

As highlighted in Chapter Two and built upon within this chapter, the need to surface the doing and undoing of gender within the organisational context is imperative to increase 'deep' conceptualisations of voice and visibility (Simpson and Lewis, 2005), to highlight reflexive and non-reflexive gender practices and practises (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010), in order to disrupt masculine superiority (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Only by challenging the social order through actions, interactions, and relationships (Chia, 1995) and, thereby, acknowledging the involvement and agency of others, can both entrepreneurship and leadership fields develop from a gender perspective.

The key argument within this thesis is that "entrepreneurship research can be advanced and legitimised by studying the nexus of the various dimensions" with leadership (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004: 789) from a gender perspective. However, scholars must be cognisant that whilst the leadership field is drawn upon to educate and develop the entrepreneurship field, "learning is often reciprocal" and entrepreneurship's vibrancy and rapid growth should not be discounted in supporting further developments within the leadership field (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004: 790).

Understanding the gendered historical and cultural progression of both fields highlights the need to be cognisant of the gendered foundations from which entrepreneurial leadership is developing, which is explored in the next section conceptualising entrepreneurial leadership.

3.7 Conceptualising Entrepreneurial Leadership

Entrepreneurial leadership as a concept is in its infancy, although an increasing number of scholars have begun to explore its meaning and offer their understandings of the notion (Vecchio, 2003; Gupta *et al.*, 2004; Chen, 2007; Darling *et al.*, 2007; Kuratko, 2007; Jones and Crompton, 2008). Vecchio (2003: 324) argues that “entrepreneurship is leadership within a narrow, specific context” (Czarniawska-Joerges and Wolff, 1991). Whilst Chen (2007) outlines entrepreneurial leadership as the creative response to new market opportunities through new business creation. Chen’s (2007) empirical study of high-tech entrepreneurial teams within Taiwan aimed to develop entrepreneurial leadership by examining whether increased levels of entrepreneurial leadership generated higher levels of creativity amongst team members by measuring patent creation. Findings indicated that entrepreneurial leadership does stimulate entrepreneurial team members’ creativity, however, Kuratko (2007) suggests this focus on business creation is limiting. He sees entrepreneurial leadership as a unique concept combining the identification of opportunities, risk taking beyond security and being resolute enough to follow ideas through.

Darling *et al.*, (2007) offer an understanding of entrepreneurial management leadership which they outline as encompassing: breaking new ground, going beyond the known and helping to create the future. They offer four strategies; attention through vision, meaning through communication, trust through positioning, and confidence through respect. They assert that this can also be applied to small and large organisations, as they promote corporate entrepreneurship rather than remaining solely focused on founder driven firms. The central tenet of their construction is that entrepreneurial leaders should endeavour to foster an environment that is supportive and has the potential to develop associates to ensure they have the loyalty and commitment to continue working towards organisational achievement (Darling *et al.*, 2007), which draws parallels with the follower positive modelling outlined by Gardner *et al.*’s (2005) conceptual authentic leader and follower development framework. Whilst the area of corporate entrepreneurship (also referred to as intrapreneurship) is an interesting and under researched topic (Darling *et al.*, 2007) it is important that the small firm context is given the attention it deserves to acknowledge context and avoid any essentialist claims.

At such an early stage of conceptual development, it is appropriate to distinguish between large and small firms, to provide the contextual sensitivity small firms warrant (Dandridge, 1979) which so far has been overlooked within early entrepreneurial-leadership literature. For example Kuratko (2007) is criticised for the way in which he conflates entrepreneurial leadership with corporate entrepreneurship within larger firms (Jones and Crompton, 2008). Subsequently this thesis will focus on founder entrepreneur-leaders within small firms.

Gupta *et al.*'s (2004) construction of entrepreneurial leadership goes further than most in outlining their understanding of the notion and arguably in learning from mistakes and historical progression of the original mainstream fields of leadership and entrepreneurship. They suggest that entrepreneurial leadership is the fusion of three concepts; entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial management, with leadership. Their conceptualisation of entrepreneurial leadership provides an understanding of a process rather than a descriptive list of individual attributes that an individual should have to be an entrepreneur leader, congruent with the understandings of gender, entrepreneurship and leadership as processes within this thesis. Their construction highlights two interrelated challenges in the process of entrepreneurial leadership: scenario enactment, in relation to how entrepreneur-leaders envisage and create scenarios to foster change; and cast enactment in relation to how entrepreneur-leaders convince others to provide the required resources to fulfil the goals. Gupta *et al.*'s (2004) central premise of entrepreneurial leadership is that entrepreneur-leaders should be able to create visionary scenarios capable of mobilising a supporting cast to enact the vision. They delineate their two challenges further as they propose that scenario enactment requires the entrepreneur-leader to frame challenges, absorb uncertainty and path clear – to clear obstructions – whilst the second challenge of cast enactment requires commitment building and specifying limits. From a gender perspective, the emergent construction of entrepreneurial leadership is ripe for attention and analysis. With the exception of one acknowledgment by Jones and Crompton, (2008) diversity should be considered within the topic, initial studies have neglected to consider the concept from a gender perspective.

The words and phrases from Ahl's (2006) paper, which she aligns to Bem's (1981) words and phrases of masculinity, are mapped against Eagly and Carli's (2007) agentic words of similar meaning. This is further developed by mapping masculine and agentic words and phrases against descriptions of entrepreneurial leadership.

When analysing the descriptions and words used by scholars constructing entrepreneurial leadership, the masculine hegemony from its two founding theory bases has clearly permeated into these early developments, with significant emphasis placed on risk taking and innovation (Gupta et al., 2004) (see Table 3.7a). Drawing on Ahl's (2006) comparison of Bem's descriptions of masculinity to entrepreneurship (see Table 3.2.2a) and Eagly and Carli's (2007) agentic and communal behaviour framework (see Table 2.3b), Table 4.3a highlights the masculine dominance across the two separate fields which have permeated within the construction of entrepreneurial leadership as scholars begin to converge the two fields.

The table highlights that by neglecting to consider entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective, masculine hegemony will continue, working within the given (Mavin, 2009b) as the social order remains unchallenged (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004).

Descriptions of masculinity flow into understandings of entrepreneurship and leadership to lead into the final descriptions of entrepreneurial leadership in the fourth column. Women will continue to struggle within the confines of the double bind (Gherardi, 1994) if scholars fail to deconstruct this emerging concept from a gender perspective. The justification for the development of the area is based upon a masculine growth rationale (e.g. Jones and Crompton, 2008) to convey the concepts importance to performance enhancement (Gupta et al., 2004).

However, whilst masculinity is evident within the above table (Table 3.7a) there were clearly masculinities noted by Bem, entrepreneur descriptions from Ahl (2006) and agentic behaviours from Eagly and Carli (2007) that had not transpired within the entrepreneurial leadership construction e.g. forceful, athletic, dominant, aggressive, individualistic and independent. Those noted which did not match the descriptions of entrepreneurship are those which are individualistic attributes that indicate little or no regard to others. This indicates within early developments the need to learn from the separate fields' mistakes and recognise the need to move away from an individualistic focus and involve others . Consequently, descriptions of entrepreneurial leadership begin to span both descriptions of masculinity and femininity and agentic and communal. For example vision is identified within the concept (e.g. Gupta et al., 2004; Darling et al., 2007), which is a masculinity and agentic behaviour. However, for this vision to be successfully achieved this must be communicated in a way that motivates followers and employees to enact (e.g. Gupta et al., 2004). Communicating and interpersonal skills are identified as femininities and communal behaviour within the below table (see Table 3.7b) illustrating their recognition within entrepreneurial leadership.

Bem's masculinity words (Ahl, 2006)	Word used to describe an Entrepreneur (Ahl, 2006)	Agentic Behaviours (Eagly and Carli, 2007)	Entrepreneurial Leadership words
Defends own beliefs	Strong willed	Assertive	Being resolute to follow ideas through (Kuratko, 2007)
Assertive	Able to withstand opposition	Assertive	Being resolute to follow ideas through (Kuratko, 2007) Confidence through the respect that they assert (Darling <i>et al.</i> , 2007)
Strong personality	Resolute, firm in temper	Dominant	Being resolute to follow ideas through (Kuratko, 2007)
Act as a leader	Leading economic and moral progress, pilot of industrialism, manager	Controlling	Absorb uncertainty (Gupta <i>et al.</i> , 2004)
Has leadership abilities	Skilled at organising, visionary	No match	Attention through vision (Darling <i>et al.</i> , 2007) Create visionary scenarios (Gupta <i>et al.</i> , 2004)
Willing to take risks	Seeks difficulty, optimistic, daring, courageous	No match	Risk taking (Kuratko, 2007) Frames challenges (Gupta <i>et al.</i> , 2004) Absorb uncertainty (Gupta <i>et al.</i> , 2004)
Makes decisions easily	Decisive in spite of uncertainty	Self confidence	Risk taking (Kuratko, 2007)
Ambitious	Achievement orientated	Ambition	Creativity amongst team members by measuring patent creation (Chen, 2007)
Analytical	Exercising sound judgement, superior business talent, foresighted, astute, perceptive, intelligent	Analytical	Identify opportunities (Kuratko, 2007) Frame challenges (Gupta <i>et al.</i> , 2004)
Willing to take a stand	Stick to a course	No match	Being resolute to follow ideas through (Kuratko, 2007)
Forceful, athletic	Unusually energetic, capacity for sustained effort, active	Forceful	No Match
Self-sufficient	Independent and detached	Self reliant	
Dominant, aggressive	Influential, seeks power, wants a private kingdom and a dynasty	Aggressive	
Individualistic	Detached	Self reliant	
Competitive	Wants to fight and conquer, wants to prove superiority	Competitive, driven	
Independent	Independent, mentally free	Independent	

Table 3.7a Masculine influence within entrepreneurship and leadership, leading to masculine construction of entrepreneurial leadership

Bem's femininity word's	Communal Behaviours (Eagly and Carli, 2007)	Entrepreneurial Leadership
Helpful	Supportive	Supportive (Darling <i>et al.</i> , 2007)
Soft spoken, does not use harsh language	Interpersonal	Communication (Jones and Crompton, 2008) Meaning through communication (Darling <i>et al.</i> , 2007)
Friendly	Friendly	No Match
Sensitive to others' needs	Sensitive	
Sympathetic	Sympathetic	
Warm	Kind	
Understanding	Empathetic	

Table 3.7b Feminine and communal influence on the construction of entrepreneurial leadership

It is important to note from a historical progression perspective that whilst the women in leadership literature has developed from Bem's (1974) work measuring psychological androgyny, with Eagly and Carli's (2007) agentic and communal descriptions, the female entrepreneurship literature has not. Ahl's (2006) paper draws heavily on Bem's (1981) work. Here the female entrepreneurship literature could learn from the developments of the women in leadership literature in order to progress understandings of perceived masculine and feminine behaviour.

Whilst it is clear from Tables 3.7a and 3.7b that femininities and communal behaviours are not as strongly represented in extant understandings of entrepreneurial leadership, the concept's recognition for the need for, and intertwined nature of both masculinities and femininities, agentic and communal behaviours, progresses both the separate fields of entrepreneurship and leadership from a gender perspective.

It begins to recognise masculinities and femininities as subjectivities (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997) legitimising flux between the two symbolic spaces (Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000) without attempting to create alternative masculinities and femininities (Risman, 2009) which work within the given gender binary (Mavin, 2009b). However, such theoretical progression still fails to identify and explore the complexity of this process between entrepreneur-leaders and their followers from a gender perspective. Whilst the theoretical concept permits entrepreneur-leaders' social flux to move between the two symbolic spaces, followers may not.

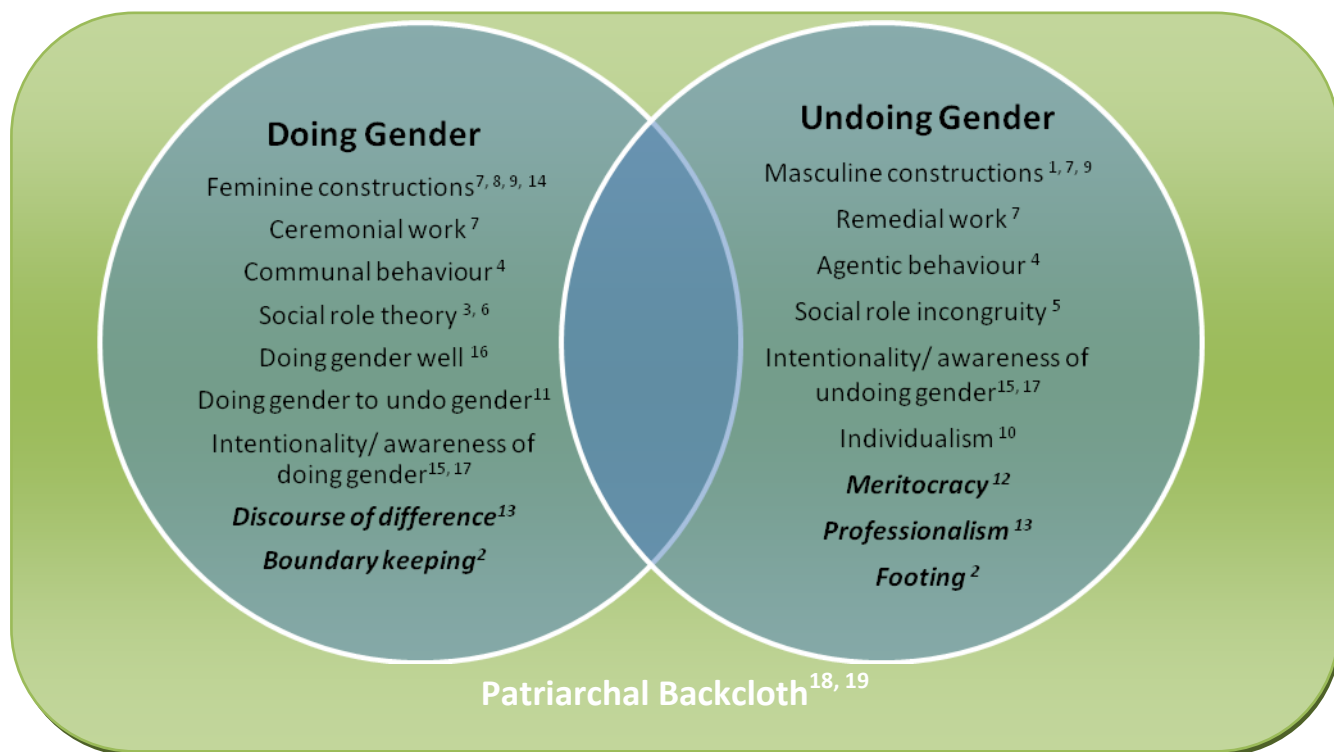
As Mavin (2009a; b) notes, women displaying masculinities and behaving in an agentic manner jolt our assumptions as they are incongruent with our social role expectations of feminine women. Women entrepreneur-leaders' legitimacy and credibility may come into question (Jeanes, 2007) as they display social role incongruity, an issue already well documented within the gender and women in leadership literature (Eagly, 2005; Mavin; 2009a, 2009b).

In order for entrepreneurial leadership to avoid 'academic amnesia' (Sayles and Stewart 1995) and learn from the pitfalls of leadership (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004), scholars must identify, explore and integrate gender as an analytical category within this early stage of conceptual development. Entrepreneurial leadership recognises the need for both masculinities and femininities, agentic and communal behaviour; therefore, entrepreneurial leadership should be viewed as a useful concept to explore women's experiences. This thesis therefore extends understandings of entrepreneurial leadership in highlighting the importance of foregrounding gender, to make visible and integrate the historical developments of gender within the entrepreneurship and leadership fields.

3.8 Progressing Entrepreneurial Leadership from a Gender Perspective

This chapter has outlined the masculine construction of entrepreneurship (Mirchandani, 1999; Ahl, 2002; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; b; Lewis, 2006; 2009; Marlow, 2006; Marlow *et al.*, 2009) highlighting the need for research exploring its gendered nature (Marlow *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, the gendered development of the emerging entrepreneurial leadership theory base was also highlighted as a result of the gendered development of both the leadership (discussed in chapter 2) and entrepreneurship literature, further supporting the understanding of this thesis that patriarchy frames understandings of leadership, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial leadership and consequently provides a backcloth to everyday lives.

This chapter's critical review of the entrepreneurship theory base from a gender perspective has developed the analytical framework by making further additions to the (un)doing gender element of the framework. Examples of how doing and undoing gender from the female entrepreneurship theory base have contributed to the analytical framework are highlighted in bold and italics (see figure 3.8).



Alvesson and Due Billing (1997)¹; Bruni *et al.*, (2004a)²; Eagly, (1987)³; Eagly and Carli (2007)⁴; Eagly and Karau (2002)⁵; Eagly *et al.*, (2000)⁶; Gherardi (1994)⁷; Grant (1988)⁸; Hines, (1992)⁹; Kelan (2008¹⁰, 2010¹¹); Lewis, (2006¹², 2009¹³); Marshall (1993)¹⁴; Martin (2006)¹⁵; Mavin and Grandy (2010)¹⁶; Nencel (2010)¹⁷ Simpson and Lewis (2005)¹⁸; Walby, (1989)¹⁹

Figure 3.8 Building upon the Analytical Framework: Female entrepreneurship Research

Lewis (2006) argues that meritocracy - an understanding that career success is available to all based upon objective criteria, personal input and effort - is a gender practice drawn upon by women entrepreneurs to neutralise experiences of gender. Like individualism (discussed in chapter 2), meritocracy attempts to remove gender from societal and organisations to appear that the gender disadvantage has been resolved, concealing continued disadvantage by allowing the masculine to remain invisible (Lewis, 2006). The inclusion of meritocracy within the analytical framework highlights another form of undoing gender as women attempt to suppress their doing of gender to create a gender neutral practice. However, given the understanding of this study, that gender is something we practice everyday (Deutsch, 2007) whether we are conscious of it or not, this thesis recognises meritocracy as a form of undoing gender.

This chapter explored Bruni *et al* (2004a) and Lewis' (2009) study of women entrepreneurs offering processes of boundary keeping and footing to either protect or open up symbolic space (Bruni *et al*'s., (2004a), and discourses of professionalism (conform to main discursive practice of a discourse of enterprise) and difference (go against the main discursive practice of a discourse of enterprise) (Lewis, 2009). Both studies continue to perpetuate binary thinking as gender is simply remapped differently (Kelan, 2010). Further gender and entrepreneurship research must challenge gender binaries by exploring how gender is done differently, allowing simultaneous enactments of masculinity and femininity (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

However, through discourses of professionalism and difference, Lewis (2009) offers an understanding of how women entrepreneurs search for situated authenticity. Within the context of this thesis authenticity is, therefore, positioned as an appropriate concept to explore women's agency (Lewis, 2009) and experiences of gender in relation to how gender is done, undone, done well and differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Lewis' (2009) assertion that authenticity is useful to explore experiences of gender is progressed within the next chapter by exploring the emerging concept of authentic leadership as an appropriate framework to understand perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership.

The chapter also noted the entrepreneur centric focus of the extant theory base (Simpson and Lewis, 2005). Given the understanding of social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al*, 2000) and the importance of others' interpretations of women's appropriate behaviour performed through a female body, follower agency should be acknowledged when exploring experiences of entrepreneurial leadership. Furthermore, initial conceptualisations of entrepreneurial leadership also acknowledge the involvement of others within the process (e.g. Gupta *et al*, 20004).

The analytical framework has the potential to make a contribution to the entrepreneurship theory base by acknowledging follower involvement and agency in their interpretations of women entrepreneurs' doing and undoing gender and also provide a gender perspective to studies of entrepreneurial leadership. Furthermore, it sensitises the researcher to the gender, women in leadership and female entrepreneurship theory bases, providing an understanding of how this has shaped the research approach and data analysis process within this study. The analytical framework will be further developed at the end of Chapter Four as understandings from the authentic leadership theory base will be added concluding the review of the literature.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the entrepreneurship literature in relation to gender highlighting its masculine construction, gendered language and comparative studies essentialising women. Further discussions highlighted the intertwined nature of gender and entrepreneurship, before discourses of meritocracy, individualism (Ahl, 2006) difference and professionalism (Lewis, 2009) were highlighted. Authenticity was identified as a useful concept to ground women's experiences historically, socially and culturally to surface and understand the complexities and tensions. The need for a feminist perspective was also delineated in order to create a shift in thinking and highlight gender practice and practising within the cultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a). Parallels between the women in leadership literature and female entrepreneurship literature were highlighted before the benefits of converging entrepreneurship and leadership to develop an entrepreneurial leadership construct from a gender perspective were discussed. Finally, the chapter outlines the elements identified within the literature review that will be taken forward to inform the analytical approach of this thesis.

The appropriateness of exploring entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective through concepts of authenticity and authentic leadership is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Authentic Leadership

4.1 Introduction

This chapter positions the emerging authentic leadership concept as appropriate to analyse women's entrepreneurial leadership experiences. The aim of this chapter is to introduce authentic leadership as a concept, further discuss the appropriateness of exploring women's experiences of entrepreneurial leadership as highlighted above and, therefore, outline the potential for contribution to current understandings through a gender lens.

Building upon Chapter Two and Three's literature review, this chapter will contribute to the first research objective to: *'critically review the gender in leadership, entrepreneurship, authentic leadership literatures before merging the three theory bases through which women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership can be theorised'*. The chapter will further develop the theoretical gender lens to address the second research objective to *'develop a gender lens, against a backdrop of patriarchy, to explore women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership to contribute new insights to studies of entrepreneurial leadership'*. The fully developed literature review and theoretical gender lens across Chapters Two, Three and Four will support the overall research question which guides this thesis: *'Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?'*

The chapter commences with an introduction to the concept of authentic leadership before critiquing relational authenticity and understandings of authenticity as a journey from a gender perspective. The appropriateness of developing the field empirically from a small business context is then outlined.

4.2 Conceptualising Authentic Leadership

The sections that follow outline extant understandings of authenticity before exploring the emerging understandings of authentic leadership.

4.2.1 Understanding Authenticity

Hartner (2002), supported by Gardner *et al.*, (2005), argue that authenticity has a long history steeped within ancient Greek philosophy that “to thine own self be true” (Gardner *et al.*, 2005: 344). However, more recent understandings of the concept have been offered to understand authenticity as “owning one’s personal experiences (values, thoughts, emotions and beliefs) and acting in accordance with one’s true self (expressing what you really think and believe and behaving accordingly)” (Gardner *et al.*, 2005: 344). Fletcher (1999: 86) argues that being true to self requires the ability to access and express one’s own thoughts and feelings” which is supported by Lewis’ (2009: 4) understanding of authenticity as the “correspondence between the internal feelings and thoughts of an individual and what that individual is communicating in public regarding their character and competence”.

The need to explore authenticity in relation to entrepreneurial leadership is highlighted by O’Neil and Ucbasaran’s (2010) paper exploring the role of authenticity in relation to individual identity and sustainable entrepreneurship. They argue that personal authenticity constraints within previous careers provided individuals with the impetus to make the transition to entrepreneurship (O’Neil and Ucbasaran, 2010). Furthermore, O’Neil and Ucbasaran’s (2010: 16) study highlights the importance of authenticity as a driver for entrepreneurship and call for future research which “explores the impact on individuals’ authenticity overtime following a transition”.

Within the entrepreneurship theory base there has been a predominance of studies focusing on growth, profit and firm size (Fenwick, 2002; Patterson and Mavin, 2009) which have perpetuated the gender binary by adopting the dominant objectivist ontology in the field. De Bruin *et al.*, (2007) argued for further research to explore the ‘messy’ real life situation of entrepreneurship of which leadership is one area for exploration, in order to understand gendered experiences of entrepreneurial leadership.

Furthermore, O'Neil and Ucbasaran (2010) contention that personal authenticity is inhibited by larger, corporate organisations also requires further exploration from a gender perspective in small firms. Given the understanding of gender in this research, entrepreneurial leadership within small businesses may appear to offer an opportunity for women to 'break free' from the masculine norms they are constantly measured against within an employing organisation (Patterson and Mavin, 2009; Mattis, 2004; Winn, 2004; Orhan and Scott, 2001) and allow them to disrupt or create different norms in their own enterprise. However, given the understanding of patriarchy and social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al*, 2000) women will still face social role incongruity (Eagly and Karau, 2002), as despite the organisational context, others may still place social role expectations on women to be feminine (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al*, 2000) and women may jolt assumptions (Mavin, 2009a, b) when they satisfy their entrepreneurial leadership role expectations by behaving in a masculine way.

Lewis (2009) further contends that authenticity for women business owners varies in relation to historical, national and cultural locations, positioning authenticity as an 'ongoing project' rather than an achieved state. The notion of 'ongoing' aligns with Levitt and Hiestand's (2004) understanding of authenticity as a 'quest' as the women in their study emphasised the need to locate themselves in a space which was socially, sexually, physically and emotionally comfortable depending upon the context. Given the patriarchal backcloth and understandings of subjectivism and agency which frame this thesis, the understanding of authenticity in this study aligns with feminist researchers Lewis (2009) and Levitt and Hiestand's (2004) view of authenticity as an 'ongoing project' and a quest for congruence between an individual's internal sense of self and what they communicate to others which varies depending upon context.

Consequently, how women experience authenticity within entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective requires further exploration given the argued social role and entrepreneurial leadership role incongruence. The next section outlines extant understandings of authentic leadership.

4.2.2 Authentic Leadership

4.2.2.1 Emergence of Authentic Leadership

The concept of authentic leadership is a “relative newcomer to the leadership literature canon” (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010: 65), emerging more recently “from the intersection of the leadership, ethics, and positive organisational behaviour” (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008: 92) literature. The concept has received much attention over the past twenty years, but has gained greater impetus within the last five years with special editions noted in the *Leadership Quarterly* (2005/1), the *Journal of Management Studies* (2005/42) and *The European Management Journal* (2007/2) (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010).

Harter (2002) describes authentic leadership as an individualistic process whereby “one acts in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings” (Harter, 2002: 382). Sparrowe (2005: 420) builds on Luthans and Avolio’s (2003) understanding of authentic leadership which develops to incorporate followers within the process, describing its purpose as:

the kind of leadership that can restore confidence comes from individuals who are true to themselves, and whose transparency “positively transforms or develops associates into leaders themselves” Luthans and Avolio, 2003, p. 243)

(Sparrowe 2005: 420)

A growing number of scholars have begun to examine authentic leadership (Roberts *et al.*, 2009) as it is looked upon as a strategy (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Shamir and Eilam, 2005) by scholars (e.g. Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Avolio and Luthans, 2006; Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Ilies *et al.*, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005; Shamir and Eilam, 2005) and practitioners (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; e.g. George *et al.*, 2007; George and Sims, 2007) to “combat the ills of organizations” (Mavin, 2009b: 83). Avolio *et al* (2004: 802) consider that:

the reason why practitioners and scholars are interested in authentic leadership is because the influence of authentic leaders extends well beyond bottom-line success; such leaders have a role to play in greater society by tackling public policy issues and addressing organisational society problems (George, 2003).

4.2.2.2 Understanding Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership is positioned as the 'root' (Avolio *et al.*, 2004) which informs and incorporates "all new positive forms of leadership including transformational, charismatic, servant and spiritual leadership" (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010: 65). Ilies *et al.*'s (2005) conceptual study outlines authentic leadership as (1) self-awareness (2) unbiased processing (3) authentic behaviour/acting and (4) authentic relational orientation. Shamir and Eilam (2005) conceptualise authentic leaders in the following way: (1) the role of the leader is a central component of their self-concept – they always enact the role of the leader not just in an official capacity; (2) they have achieved a high level of self-resolution or self-concept clarity – they have strongly held beliefs which are clear and consistent, providing a stable self concept which provides a valuable source of coherence to guide their behaviour; (3) their goals are self-concordant in such a way that their goals embody their values and beliefs; (4) their behaviour is self-expressive and aligned with their values and beliefs. However, in exploring authentic leadership, practitioners, academics and academic practitioners have found that "there may be much more to authentic leadership than just being true to oneself" (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008:90) and that followers should be acknowledged. Recognising authentic leadership as a social process of emerging patterns of relationships and interactions (Chia, 1995) that "cannot be reduced to the independent contributions either of people or contexts" (Hosking and Morley, 1991: 63) highlights the need to explore both leader and follower experiences (Meindl, 1995).

Gardner *et al.* (2005), progress understandings by incorporating Shamir and Eilam (2005) and Ilies *et al.*'s (2005) authentic leadership interpretations into their theoretical paper to offer a self-based conceptual framework of authentic leader and follower development. The following elements are the 'root' of their authentic leader-follower development framework: self-awareness (in relation to values, identity, emotions and motives/goals) through the process of reflecting on an individual's personal life history, followed by self-regulation whereby individuals endorse their actions at the highest level of reflection, encouraging internal questioning (Deci and Ryan, 1995) enabling relational transparency and authentic action to emerge. Gardner *et al.* (2005) posit that processes of self awareness and self-regulation foster positive modelling amongst followers which encourage them to engage in self-awareness and self-regulation processes, generating outcomes of trust, engagement and workplace well being, contributing to sustainable and veritable performance.

Many traditional leadership theories (trait, behaviour, situational, transactional and transformational) prescribe what an individual should do to be a leader which overlooks their subjective journeys (Turner and Mavin, 2006) and does not acknowledge followers within such processes. Authentic leadership engages leaders on a journey of self-discovery requiring an exploration of their life histories and trigger events to understand how their identity, motives and goals, life history, values and emotions shape their leadership (Gardner *et al.*, 2005). Gardner *et al.*, (2005) argue that only through antecedents of leaders' personal histories and trigger events can self-awareness be gained to enable relational transparency with their followers. Shamir and Eilam (2005: 396) highlight the significance of individuals' explorations of their life histories, as they:

provide leaders with a "meaning system" from which they can act authentically... Therefore, leaders are authentic to the extent that they act and justify their actions on the basis of the meaning system provided by their life stories.

This understanding of leaders' self-exploration progresses understandings of authentic leadership as a theory to a development framework, aligning with the understanding of authenticity as an 'ongoing quest' (Levitt and Hiestand, 2004) highlighted in earlier (see section 4.2.1). Furthermore, the personal exploration and meaning attachment that life stories facilitate, are not limited to the individual leader, but also indicate to followers their level of self-knowledge, self-concept and clarity which followers are said to draw upon to interpret their leader's authenticity (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). This element is also important to followers as they may also reflect upon such meanings as part of their own leadership self-development (Shamir and Eilam, 2005).

Ladkin and Taylor (2010: 65) highlight that authentic leadership literature is based upon the assumption that a leader's self-reference "will automatically be communicated to followers who will experience the leader as authentic". Whilst Ladkin and Taylor (2010) identify that the literature does consider *how* assessments of authenticity are made by followers (Avolio *et al.*, 2004) developments have focused upon measurable variables e.g. amount of time followers spend with leaders', and negated considerations from a gender perspective. Ladkin and Taylor (2010) draw upon Fields' (2007: 196) contention that current understandings of authentic leadership are unclear in relation to how "leaders' self (authenticity) and the leaders' underlying moral values (integrity) become apparent to followers". Furthermore, they draw upon Pittinsky and Tyson (2005) study exploring how followers assess political leaders' authenticity from an ethnicity perspective in which they argue that a leader's internal sense of self is "not always readily apparent to observers" (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010: 65).

Given the patriarchal backcloth and understanding of gender and social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) discussed in Chapter Two, this study extends Pittinsky and Tyson (2005) and Ladkin and Taylor's (2010) argument that leaders' internal sense of self is not always apparent to observers highlighting further complexities from a gender perspective. Women's internal sense of self will be not *interpreted* or *accepted* in the same way by followers within the process of entrepreneurial leadership.

With the understanding of authentic leadership outlined, the chapter moves to critique extant developments within the field from a gender perspective.

4.3 Struggle for Relational Authenticity: The Neglect of Social Role Theory

The work of Kernis (2003) has been central in the conceptual development of authentic leadership to date with key studies by Ilies *et al.* (2005) and Gardner *et al.* (2005) drawing significantly upon Kernis' (2003) understanding of authenticity (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). Kernis (2003) suggests that authenticity enables optimal levels of self-esteem, whereby individuals are aware of, and come to accept their strengths and weaknesses resulting in stable, congruent, high self-esteem, rather than a more fragile self-esteem. Kernis (2003) characterises such high levels of self-esteem as being able to form open and transparent relationships and congruence between behaviour, values and beliefs. Those who have a more fragile self esteem are generally those who are guided by social expectations (Kernis, 2003). This understanding also aligns with Ryan and Deci's (2003) tenet that authentic achievement is attained through internalised self-regulation processes, in that one's behaviour is guided by one's values rather than external factors such as "threats, inducements, or social expectations and rewards" (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008: 93).

Leaders participating in George *et al.*'s, (2007: 135) study warn "aspiring leaders to be wary of getting caught up in social, peer, or parental expectations" as they keep issues of gender out (Lewis, 2006) and maintain an understanding of instrumentalism (Kelan, 2008). Even Shamir and Eilam's (2005) inductive approach concurs that one must not conform to others' expectations in order to remain authentic. Given the patriarchal backcloth and understanding of gender within this thesis, social role expectations cannot be overlooked when studying authenticity from a gender perspective (Eagly, 2005).

Eagly (2005) highlights the need to understand authentic leadership from a gender perspective by outlining the complexities of leader and followers' perspectives:

The first component, which Avolio et al. (2004) treated as defining authenticity, stresses that leaders endorse values that promote the interests of the larger community and transparently convey these values to followers. The second component, which Avolio et al. (2004) regarded as following from the first component, stresses that followers personally identify with these values and accept them as appropriate for the community in which they are joined to the leader.

(Eagly, 2005: 461)

Eagly (2005) labels this understanding relational authenticity to acknowledge the development of a process which considers followers' and leaders' behaviour, however, she contends that the two components outlined above are dependent upon a leader's legitimacy. Eagly (2005) argues that leader legitimacy is bestowed when an individual is accepted by followers as a representative of a group and the group accord her/him with the legitimacy "to promote a set of values on behalf of a community" (Eagly, 2005: 459) as relational authenticity.

An underlying assumption within authentic leadership is that followers willingly accept leaders' values and beliefs for the group, organisation or community (Eagly, 2005). This overlooks gendered perceptions, created and sustained by a patriarchal backcloth acknowledging follower agency, and arguably creating a leadership concept whereby followers are now 'done to', rather than leaders. Eagly (2005) suggests that where there is incongruity between leaders' and followers' values "fault lines" (Eagly, 2005: 461) appear.

Chrobot-Mason *et al.*, (2009) suggest that where tensions spill over from society into organisations further fault lines appear, creating greater challenges which impact upon organisational performance. Against a backcloth of patriarchy where masculine dominance has prevailed within processes of entrepreneurship and leadership, the complexities for women to meet their social and leader role expectations are highlighted.

Eagly (2005) suggests that leaders must engage in negotiation and persuasion to gain greater acceptance within the leadership process. However, in order to engage in negotiation, followers must first identify with leaders socially and personally to bestow leaders with the legitimacy “to convey and promote consensual values” (Eagly, 2005: 461). Eagly’s (2005) central tenet is that as an outsider group, women face greater challenges in gaining leadership legitimacy and consequently struggle to achieve relational authenticity to allow them to promote and represent values on behalf of a community.

Drawing upon social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000), Eagly (2005) argues that women’s feminine social role expectations and masculine expectations as a leader are in binary opposition resulting in role incongruity (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Women are, therefore, denied the possibility of achieving relational authenticity (Eagly, 2005) within the gender dualism as they are prohibited from occupying both the symbolic space of femininity and masculinity (Gherardi, 1994). Consequently, as women leaders express values and demonstrate behaviour in one symbolic space (Gherardi, 1994) they automatically fail to meet the expectations of their other social role or leader role. With gendered leadership assumptions deeming men legitimate leaders, society is unaccustomed to women possessing positions of authority, and consequently feels uncomfortable with a change of hierarchical relations between the sexes (Eagly, 2005). Simply, before a woman speaks or acts, she is marked as different and an outsider (Eagly, 2005; Kantola, 2008) as she embodies difference in a leadership domain. This is exemplified during the US democratic primary election in 2008 with Hilary Clinton.

Throughout the election campaign “Hilary Clinton’s modus operandi had been agentic behaviour” (Mavin, 2009a: 18), however, during a press conference prior to the New Hampshire primary she displayed some vulnerability, her eyes had reportedly welled up and she became red faced. The press focused upon this apparent emotional display and although she did not cry the press nick named this event ‘Hilary’s Tears’. Clinton went on to win the New Hampshire primary despite Obama’s lead going into the election.

Ladkin and Taylor (2010) attribute Clinton’s success against Obama to the public’s assessment of her authenticity in relation to her “bodily signals” (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010: 66). Ladkin and Taylor (2010: 67) suggest that Clinton’s display of “emotions and motives below the polished performance the public had come to expect from her” had increased her level of perceived authenticity within the eyes of the public as she does gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Analysing this critical incident from a gender perspective furthers understandings of others' gendered expectations as Mavin (2009a: 18) highlights:

It appears as if there was a collective sigh of relief – the woman cries – and can now be placed back in a 'communal box' or 'non-leadership' stereotype.

Consequently, whilst Clinton was successful in the short-term winning the New Hampshire primary, as a result of displaying emotions aligned with her social role expectations as a feminine woman, in the long-term she would be perceived as not ready to run for office as "anyone who needed to carry a Kleenex in her purse was unfit for the highest office in the land" (Mavin, 2009a: 18).

Followers' interpretations of women's authenticity are, therefore, measured against leadership social norms of masculinity and their gender role as women are evaluated against feminine values. Consequently, in alignment with gender social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) women are expected to behave in feminine ways which satisfies their gender role expectations but labels them ineffective leaders (Mavin, 2009b). If women are agentic their behaviours are deemed effective for their leadership role, however, they jolt our assumptions (Mavin, 2009a, 2009b) as their behaviour contradicts their gender social role expectations. Women must contend with performing under the leadership mantle whilst also convincing others that they are conforming "to expectations concerning appropriate female behaviour" (Eagly, 2005: 469). Consequently, Eagly, (2005: 470) suggests it would be "bad advice" to suggest that women could merely be themselves and gain legitimacy. As Eagly asserts (2005: 471):

knowing and being oneself is a luxury enjoyed by people from groups that have traditionally inhabited high level leadership roles – most contexts white men from relatively privileged backgrounds.

Men are afforded the 'luxury' of their gender social role expectation being aligned with leadership expectations. Understanding authentic leadership from a gender perspective highlights the importance of recognising follower agency within the process of authentic leadership. The leadership field more generally recognises that leadership does not occur in a vacuum (Hunt and Dodge, 2000), but is bestowed by followers (Hunter *et al.*, 2007), therefore, authentic leadership should also develop in a similar vein.

Gardner *et al.*'s (2009) recent study is the only other study which addresses the issue of relational authenticity as they problematise emotional labour within authentic leadership. Gardner *et al.* (2009: 467) question how leaders "manage their emotional displays to foster favourable follower impressions without violating their authenticity" and sustaining a level of contextual appropriateness. Drawing upon Gardner *et al.*'s (2005) understanding of authentic leadership, characterised by relational transparency – showing one's true self by one's values and beliefs rather than social expectations – Gardner *et al.* (2009) suggest this implies leaders' immunity from situational pressure to conform to emotional rules. They challenge whether it is realistic to assume leaders are able to contravene such "emotional display rules in their quest for authenticity" (Gardner *et al.*, 2009: 468). They offer a conceptual framework which focuses on (1) organisational situations that are loaded with emotional display rules; (2) leader emotional display responses to such situations; (3) follower impressions and perceptions of authenticity; (4) follower trust in the leader; (5) the leader's felt authenticity; (6) leader well being; and (7) individual differences among leaders that moderate their emotional display responses to affective events. They suggest that the framework proposes three types of leader emotional displays:

(1) surface acting, which involves simulating emotions appropriate for the situation that are not actually felt; (2) deep acting, which involves attempts to actually experience the emotions that are called for by the situation; and (3) displays of genuine emotion (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993).

(Gardner *et al.*, 2009: 468)

They further outline that leader emotional displays are tempered by leaders' individual differences of emotional intelligence, self-monitoring, and political skill; however, they do not critique this from a gender perspective. Emotion is positioned as a feminine and communal description; thereby it is not traditionally associated with effective leadership expectations which Gardner *et al.*, (2009) do not acknowledge. Gardner *et al.*'s., (2009) critique of Gardner *et al.*'s., (2005) assertion that leaders are immune from social pressure, aligns with Eagly's (2005) gender tenet of women's struggle to achieve relational authenticity, as it assumes followers are able to break free from gender dualism and masculine hegemony (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004).

Neglecting to consider followers' agency and in their gendered interpretations of women leader's values and behaviour in relation to their gender social role (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) and their leadership role expectations, distorts the realities of women's lived leadership experiences. This results in what Eagly and Carli (2007:63) coin a "misdiagnosis of leadership", as the relational aspect of authentic leadership has not been highlighted and discussed from a gender perspective within the concept's development to date (with the exception of Eagly, 2005).

Eagly (2005) calls for greater consideration of authenticity within leader and follower relationships to incorporate follower perceptions. Whilst the field has recognised that leadership does not occur in a vacuum (Hunt and Dodge, 2000) but is bestowed by followers (Hunter *et al.*, 2007) further recognition of their agency and gendered interpretations within authentic leadership is imperative to progress understanding of how woman leaders experience gender.

The section that follows will discuss the importance of trust, integrity and life stories to authentic leadership and considers the complexities of this from a gender perspective.

4.3.1 Importance of Trust and Integrity

With the understanding outlined above, that leadership requires followers' bestowal (Hunter *et al.*, 2007) of leadership legitimacy (Eagly, 2005), authentic leadership requires more of leaders than simply being true to self. Avolio *et al.* (2004: 806) highlight that:

authentic leaders act in accordance with deep personal values and convictions, to build credibility and win the respect and trust of followers by encouraging diverse viewpoints and building networks of collaborative relationships with followers and thereby lead in a manner that followers recognize as authentic..

(Avolio *et al.*, 2004: 806)

Trust is identified by Avolio *et al.* (2004) as one process which link authentic leadership to follower attitudes and behaviours. Authentic leaders must build trust through individualised concern and respect for followers from which they demonstrate:

high moral standards, integrity, and honesty, their favourable reputation fosters positive expectations among followers enhancing their levels of trust and willingness to cooperate with the leader for the benefit of the organisation

(Avolio *et al.*, 2004: 810).

Gardner *et al.*, (2005) agree that when authentic leaders are viewed by followers as genuine, reliable and display high levels of integrity, high levels of trust will be elicited in followers.

The importance of, and intertwined nature of trust and authentic leadership is highlighted by Avolio *et al.* (2004). They suggest that trust results in positive organisational outcomes, outlining that when “followers believe in their leader’s ability, integrity, and benevolence, they are more trusting and willing to engage in risk-taking behaviours” (Avolio *et al.*, 2004: 811). Consequently, trust within the leadership relationship is not possible without authenticity in terms of self-awareness and relational transparency (Avolio *et al.*, 2004).

Gardner *et al.* (2009: 472) suggest “there is a conceptual overlap and a close relationship between the constructs of perceived authenticity and integrity” in that both have a positive relationship with follower trust. In their conceptual paper Palanski and Yammarino (2009) contend that whilst integrity is a frequently cited term in leadership studies, it lacks a theoretical base. Numerous understandings of integrity have been offered as Palanski and Yammarino (2009: 406) outline:

(1) integrity as wholeness; (2) integrity as consistency between words and actions; (3) integrity as consistency in adversity; (4) integrity as being true to oneself; and (5) integrity as morality/ethics (including definitions such as honesty, trustworthiness, justice and compassion).

Palanski and Yammarino (2007) argue that the most appropriate conceptualisation of integrity is the consistency between words and actions. This understanding parallels Avolio *et al.*’s (2004) understanding of how authentic leaders develop trusting relationships with their followers as they “transparently convey their attributes and values, aspirations and weaknesses...followers come to know what the leader values and stands for” (Avolio *et al.*, 2004: 811).

Palanski and Yammarino (2009) contend that other understandings are evident within other concepts, specifically noting authenticity within the fourth understanding outlined above, of being true to oneself.

Further exploration of integrity within the authentic leadership context is required particularly at the dyadic level of leader and follower to explore how consistency between words and actions and bestowal of leadership legitimacy is experienced from a gender perspective. Avolio *et al.* (2004) contend that personal and social identification by followers determines the relationship between authentic leadership and trust in the leader.

From a gender perspective, this is complex given that leadership and social role expectations, as previously discussed, work within the 'given' (Mavin, 2009b) gender dualism. For a woman to do gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) and behave in an exaggerated feminine way she fails to behave as a successful masculine leader or entrepreneur. Furthermore, if she undoes gender or does gender differently through simultaneous enactments of masculinity and femininity performed through a socially perceived woman's body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) she is also perceived to fail in her social role to be a feminine woman and entrepreneur and leader. Avolio *et al.* (2004: 801) suggest that "authentic leaders exert their influence on followers' attitudes and behaviours", failing to recognise follower agency in relation to their gendered interpretations.

4.3.2 Significance of Life Stories

Given the understanding of social role theory and the recognition of its centrality in understanding followers' gendered interpretations of leader legitimacy, the same understanding should also be extended specifically to the life stories element of authentic leadership as Shamir and Eilam (2005) argue they are a major source of information for followers. Leaders are encouraged to explore their life stories and trigger events to increase their self-awareness (Gardner *et al.*, 2005) in order to relate transparently with their followers, thus enabling them to identify with their leader at a personal and social level (Avolio *et al.*, 2004), whilst also encouraging them to engage in the same reflective practice to become authentic followers (Gardner *et al.*, 2005). Extant understandings of this reflective practice are not analysed from a gender perspective.

Drawing upon Martin's (2006) study highlighting the need for reflexivity of gender, scholars should be mindful of the need for leaders and their followers to be aware of and understand how one has engaged in the *doing* and *undoing* of gender (Jeanes, 2007) whether intentionally or non-reflexively (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010).

Gardner *et al.* (2005) and Shamir and Eilam (2005) argue that authentic leadership relies heavily on self-relevant meanings leaders attaches to their life stories, therefore, greater exploration of how gender is experienced through their life stories is required to understand the significance leaders, and this study argues, more importantly followers place on these experiences. As George *et al.* (2007: 130) state, leaders are not "passive observers of their lives" but can reflect upon their past experiences towards developing their self-awareness, and, therefore reflect upon their experiences of gender. Consequently, engaging in gender aware reflection will further support leaders' and followers' understandings of the complexities of their experiences and expectations respectively.

Exploring reflexivity of doing and undoing of gender (Martin, 2006) through life stories has the potential to foreground gender within authentic leadership. By raising gender awareness to both leaders and followers the 'gender we think' (Gherardi, 1994) can be challenged creating a space to understand and accept tensions and complexities and avoid a remapping of the gender binary (Kelan, 2010).

Eagly (2005) herself becomes trapped within the gender 'given' (Mavin, 2009b) as she suggests that there are some encouraging developments within authentic leadership in relation to participative decision making and transformational leadership which she suggests makes it easier for female leaders to achieve relational authenticity (Avolio and Gardner, 2005) as it moves to a more feminised form. Eagly's (2005) perpetuation of the gendered nature of leadership, through her homogenisation of women, serves to highlight the need for scholars to remain reflexively vigilant of the doing and undoing of gender (Jeanes, 2007) within research.

Eagly's (2005) essentialist view highlights the need to reiterate to gender scholars as well as scholars more generally that they must challenge and rethink their approach to studies of authentic leadership and recognise their own gendered assumptions to challenge the gender binary (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Allowing gender to go unacknowledged enables gendered assumptions to go undetected and masculine values to flourish unchallenged (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004).

The section that follows discusses the importance of disrupting the authentic leadership binary.

4.4 Disrupting the Authentic Leadership Binary

From Kernis' (2003) and Ryan and Deci's (2003) understanding of authenticity, they neglect to critique the underlying assumption which underpins both studies. Kernis' (2003) and Ryan and Deci's (2003) studies position authenticity as an achieved state, with Kernis' (2003) conception of optimal self-esteem in particular creating a dualism positioning high, stable and congruent levels of self-esteem in opposition to fragile self esteem. As discussed in Chapter Two, this is problematic, as creation of a binary results in a social order whereby one state is preferred over another (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) creating truth effects (Tracy and Trethewey, 2005). In this instance high-self esteem would be positioned as 'One' (de Beauvoir, 1953), the preferred authentic state and fragile self esteem as the 'Other' (de Beauvoir, 1953), least preferred and inauthentic state.

Like the gender dualism, working within the 'given' (Mavin, 2009b) may elicit a number of questions such as; '*how do you know when you have attained authenticity?*' as both Kernis (2003) and Ryan and Deci (2003) suggest. Who decides that you have achieved an authentic state? And, if you have, how do you maintain it? This could result in a further problem for the development of authentic leadership, as scholars search for attributes of an ideal authentic leader as indicators of their authentic achievement. There is emerging evidence of this in Walumbwa *et al.*'s (2008) study. Drawing upon five data samples across China, Kenya and the United States, they have developed a "multi dimensional theory based questionnaire of authentic leadership (the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire [ALQ])" (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008: 91).

Walumbwa *et al.* (2008) argue that the ambiguity in attempting to measure authentic leadership behaviour can be attributable to the lack of empirical work within the field:

simply expecting leaders to be more authentic and to demonstrate integrity will be ineffective if tools for measuring these aspects of leadership are lacking.

(Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008: 90)

The danger of contemporary studies such as Walumbwa *et al.*'s (2008) ALQ, is authentic leadership could become prescriptive and individualised to a leader rather than maintaining the fluidity of a social process.

Given masculine hegemony within leadership (highlighted in Chapter Two) such descriptions will continue to perpetuate masculine and agentic alignment with men and thereby fail to disrupt the social order (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Tracy and Trethewey's (2005) conceptual study of real and fake identities of employees highlights that:

contemporary discourses reinforce the notion that real or authentic selves can be found in ways that cohere or compete with organisational norms and as such, encourage a very particular version of institutional subjectivity

(Tracy and Trethewey, 2005: 172)

George *et al.* (2007) suggest that any attempts to become prescriptive about authentic leadership should be avoided. Followers trust leaders who are genuine and authentic, rather than those who attempt to imitate others (George *et al.*, 2007). In their study interviewing 125 leaders, George *et al.* (2007) aimed to understand how they developed their leadership abilities whilst also exploring their life stories, personal successes and failures. Key findings confirmed that there are no ideal applicable traits, skills or behaviours, but that leadership emerged from leaders' individual life stories, compounding the significance of life stories highlighted in Section 4.3.2. They likened authentic leadership to the dedication of a musician or athlete, suggesting "you must devote yourself to a lifetime of realizing your potential" (George *et al.*, 2007: 130). With this understanding, George *et al.* (2007) view authentic leadership as a journey which begins by understanding the story of your life - which this thesis argues – is interpreted against a backdrop of patriarchy.

4.4.1 Understanding Authentic Leadership as a Journey

Understandings of authentic leadership should be viewed as a continuum of temporal spaces of becoming more or less authentic (Erickson, 1995) dependent upon the extent of negotiation or persuasion that has taken place between the leader and her followers. This enables fluid understandings of authentic leadership rather than a binary of inauthentic leadership, and a utopian state of authentic leadership.

The contextual sensitivity of authenticity, in relation to others historical, social and cultural issues (Lewis, 2009); is referred to as *relative* authentic leadership by Erickson, (1995) or *contingent* authentic leadership by Roberts *et al.*, (2009).

Avolio and Gardner (2005) highlight that self-awareness, a key element of authenticity, is an emergent process that will never reach a finite end. Roberts *et al.*, (2009) assert that authenticity is always in a variable state as individuals are never wholly authentic or inauthentic, but always in a state of constant flux i.e. 'relative authenticity' (Erickson, 1995).

Consistently remaining true to one's values, without any consideration of contextual sensitivity would be ill advised for anyone, but from a woman's perspective the need for contextual sensitivity (Lewis, 2009) in order to gain leadership legitimacy (Eagly, 2005) is vital. Eagly's (2005) contention asserts that women face greater challenges to gain leadership legitimacy from followers, and social role incongruity (Eagly and Karau, 2002) of their expectations as a woman and a leader. Remaining true to one's values despite the context is idealistic (George *et al.*, 2007) and does not support women in their experiences of authentic leadership. As Lewis (2009) argues in relation to authenticity, the need for contextual sensitivity is paramount and within the context of authentic leadership, this is no different as we must begin to appreciate the extent to which women engage in negotiation and persuasion with their followers depending on the context.

Levitt and Hiestand's (2004) study of lesbians highlights the importance of "securing social acceptance and maintaining authenticity to one's inner sense of gender" (2004: 619) for their research participants. The women in their study understood the need to negotiate their gender depending upon their context. They were sensitive to situations where they felt able

to push the edge of acceptability and maintain their sense of authenticity or to tone down their gender performance as that authenticity might distance others or engender threats.

(Levitt and Hiestand, 2004: 619)

The women emphasised a need to locate themselves in a place that was socially, sexually, physically and emotionally comfortable in a given context, which meant their behaviour differed in different contexts but they felt they were still able to retain levels of authenticity. Roberts *et al.* (2009) concur with Levitt and Hiestand (2004) as they suggest individuals:

engage in self censorship. Suppressing their ideas and opinions because they perceive that others in their environment hold different or less controversial views

(Roberts *et al.*, 2009: 153).

Therefore, authenticity can be understood in a liminal sense (Giddens, 2009) providing fresh understandings of women entrepreneurs' experiences outside of the gender binary focusing on how authenticity is experienced rather than lacked by women (Roberts *et al.*, 2009).

In Tracy and Trethewey's (2005: 185) study of authentic identities of employees, they suggest that replacing terms such as authentic and real with "preferred" would facilitate an understanding of identity as "ideological, constructed, negotiated and constantly shifting". They offer the metaphor of a crystallised self to emphasise the politicised and layered nature of identity and its ability to grow and alter to support understandings of identity. Drawing upon Tracy and Trethewey's (2005) considerations of crystallised leadership in relation to authentic leadership could be considered in furthering understandings of women's experiences of entrepreneurial leadership as preferred and constantly shifting, developing and growing.

Lewis' (2009: 6) study exploring the authentic identities of women business owners, highlighted that women business owner's draw upon a discourse of professionalism, and difference which she argues draws upon masculine and feminine discourses respectively to "facilitate recognition by others, as well as themselves, of the authenticity of their enterprise identity" (Lewis, 2009:6). Drawing upon discourses of differences and professionalism provides women the social flux to be "true to oneself in context" (Lewis, 2009: 7), as "individuals situate themselves socially and operate within a moral context where there is a clear notion of 'the right way to do business'" (Lewis, 2009: 13). From an entrepreneurial identity perspective, Lewis' (2009) study empirically explores how women entrepreneurs experience and manage their social role incongruity (Eagly and Karau, 2002), however, in doing so she perpetuates the gender binary rather than exploring the fluidity of women's experiences of authenticity by suggesting women have a "dual consciousness" (Lewis, 2009: 12).

Lewis (2009) contends that women draw upon a masculine discourse of professionalism to gain leadership legitimacy, and the feminine discourse of difference to meet their social role expectations as a woman and does not address how simultaneous enactments of masculinity and femininity are experienced (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). In sustaining a gender binary, it is therefore, unsurprising that Lewis (2009) contends that a masculine discourse of professionalism prevails over difference in women's experiences, as a consequence of a binary is the social order it dictates (Knight and Kerfoot, 2004). However, Lewis (2009) highlights an important point in drawing upon authenticity to develop the female entrepreneurship literature, as it serves to extend our understandings of female entrepreneurship business experiences to move beyond dominant understandings of women in business' primary motivation being to balance child care. Consequently, exploring women's entrepreneurial leadership experiences through authentic leadership will progress understandings of female entrepreneurship further.

Authentic leadership should be understood as a continuum, enabling individuals the social flux to be contextually sensitive (Lewis, 2009) within their own levels of internal comfort (Levitt and Hiestand, 2004), authenticity is never a journey to achievement, but always contextual and in a state of constant flux. Authenticity should be considered in relation to a spectrum that individuals can move between being more or less authentic (Erickson, 1995; Roberts *et al.*, 2009) depending on the extent of compromise in the negotiation and persuasion stage. Individuals' positions on this spectrum are dependent upon what is relevant within each relational context (Roberts *et al.*, 2009), consequently, authenticity is dependent upon an individual's social and cultural location.

4.4.2 Authentic Leadership: Moving Gender Beyond Performativity

When drawing upon authenticity in relation to gender, significant inconsistencies are highlighted in relation to extant and accepted understandings of gender. Butler (1990) asserts that there can never be an authentic self because we are always performing to expectations in any given context. As highlighted and discussed earlier (see Chapter Two, Section 2.4) women leaders face a double bind (Gherardi, 1994; Eagly and Carli, 2007), they must maintain a presence across the symbolic universes of masculinity and femininity.

In their role as leaders, women are interpreted against the masculine norm and are marked and cast as the 'other' (Simpson and Lewis, 2005), as they lack leadership legitimacy by their very sex (Eagly, 2005; Eagly and Karau, 2002) jolting our assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) of what is deemed appropriate behaviour for women. Consequently, their gender social role expectations as women pull them into the opposing side of the binary located in the symbolic space of femininity.

Faced with the double bind (Gherardi, 1994, Eagly and Carli, 2007) where in order to become recognised and accepted as legitimate leaders by others women are required to sacrifice their gender identity, as societal expectations within the gender dualism do not allow gender fluidity (Bryans and Mavin, 2003), the ability to move freely between the two symbolic spaces. It is imperative that women have an awareness and understanding of societal expectations and how others will evaluate (Powell *et al.*, 2008) and consequently label their behaviour to make sense of their leadership experiences and the levels of negotiation, persuasion and compromises they may be required to make in order to be bestowed leadership legitimacy from followers.

Equipped with the understanding of women leaders' behaviours being measured by others within the gender binary, Eagly (2005: 470) argues that it would "bad advice" to suggest that women should merely be themselves if they wish to be socially accepted as an entrepreneur-leader and a woman to progress because societal expectations prohibit gender flux (Bryans and Mavin, 2003).

However, Eagly and Carli's (2007: 67) assertion that "to pull off such a transformation whilst maintaining a sense of authenticity as a leader" is difficult for *all* women essentialises them, perpetuating binary thinking by suggesting that all women are feminine. Eagly and Carli's (2007) disregard women who feel comfortable to behave in masculine and agentic ways (Mavin, 2009b), therefore, suggesting that *all* women who perform masculine agentic behaviour are inauthentic and reliant on performativity (Butler, 1990).

Roberts *et al.*'s. (2009: 161) understanding of authenticity which suggests that individuals are required "to defy or complicate other people's stereotypic, simplistic, and/or restrictive expectations" is more appropriate to understand authentic leadership from a gender perspective. Eagly's (2005) critique of authentic leadership and Butlers (1990) notion of performativity are limiting as they remain within the given gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b) prohibiting fluidity of either concept.

Robert *et al.*'s. (2009) understanding provides individuals with the fluidity to move between spaces of masculinity and femininity and jolt others' assumptions of behaviour (Mavin, 2009a; b) deemed suitable for their social role or entrepreneur leader role in order to become authentic. Furthermore, there is also potential to unsettle the gender binary by exploring how gender may be done differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Analysing authentic leadership from a gender perspective would challenge gendered assumptions with the emerging concept and make a contribution to the field. Furthermore, exploring experiences and expectations of gender through authentic leadership supports the development of gender by highlighting the fluidity and, therefore, the inherent complexities and tensions (Hearn, 1998) that emerge by attempting to disrupt the 'given' (Mavin, 2009b) gender dualism.

4.5 Authentic Leadership Suitability within the Small Business Context

Whilst authentic leadership has received increased attention in recent years it remains in the early stages of conceptual development (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008), and has been criticised for its theoretical focus (Turner and Mavin, 2006) predominance of conceptual studies and lack of empirical work (Roberts *et al.*, 2009; Yammarino *et al.*, 2008; Avolio *et al.*, 2004). In Yammarino *et al.*'s (2008) exploration of the level of analysis of extant authentic leadership research they highlight 23 conceptual papers and only four empirical papers. Consequently, further empirical research within the authentic leadership field is required to further develop the concept. In order to avoid the leadership déjà vu effect (Hunt and Dodge, 2000) a critique of the issues within this emerging field must be addressed from a gender perspective to challenge assumptions and disrupt the social order (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) highlighted in Chapter Two.

Given the lack of empirical work (Roberts *et al.*, 2009; Yammarino *et al.*, 2008; Avolio *et al.*, 2004) within authentic leadership it is appropriate to consider the contextual suitability of exploring the concept. Authentic leadership is thought to be effective in organisations with simple structures (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Jensen and Luthans, 2006). Small businesses are one possible site as they facilitate the cascading effect from leaders to followers required by authentic leadership (Jensen and Luthans, 2006). The physical locations, layouts and close working patterns of small businesses increase leaders' visibility and personal contact with their followers making it more likely for their authenticity to be analysed (Jones and Crompton, 2008).

Jensen and Luthans (2006) further suggest that applying authentic leadership within the entrepreneurship and small business context will enable leaders to be better equipped to withstand the challenges of new businesses and in understanding the effect on followers, in relation to their personal and social identification with their leader's life stories to enable the development of trust to engage in risk taking behaviours (Avolio *et al.*, 2004).

The importance of leaders to motivate their followers and facilitate their buy-in into their vision is crucial (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004). Small businesses have limited resources available; consequently, ensuring they have the full support of their followers is imperative to the leader. Mayer *et al.* (1995) highlights the importance of gaining trust, engagement and empowering all people within a business to gain the most from them, with the potential of developing them into leaders themselves, aligned with the central tenets of authentic leadership of building trust outlined above (see Section 4.3.1).

There has been very little empirical research on authentic leadership. Jensen and Luthans (2006) begin to fill this gap by exploring the intersection of the leadership and entrepreneurship literature through their study investigating the impact of US entrepreneurs' authentic behaviour on employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment and happiness at work. Drawing upon authentic leadership as a guiding framework, they explored the relationship between employee perceptions of their entrepreneur's authentic leadership and their own attitude and happiness within the work environment. Results of Jensen and Luthans (2006) highlight the positive relationship between employee perceptions of authentic leadership behaviour and employee attitude in relation to job role satisfaction, organisational commitment and workplace happiness. They further highlight the link between employee attitude and business outcomes in relation to production, customer service, profit and overall job performance. Perceptions of authentic leadership, therefore, positively affect employee work attitude and happiness and have a direct impact on performance (Jensen and Luthans, 2006).

Whilst Jensen and Luthans' (2006), study is useful in its convergence of authentic leadership and entrepreneurial leadership within the small business context, the methodological design and analytical considerations do not consider the gendered nature of the small businesses or acknowledge the concept as a social process. Using a quantitative survey method, Jensen and Luthans (2006), work within the given (Mavin, 2009b) gender dualism, neglecting the subjective realities and contexts of their participants. Jensen and Luthans (2006) do not consider the gender implications, for example that 92% of their sample operate within the service and retail sectors, deemed to be a 'female ghetto' in entrepreneurship (Shaw *et al.*, 2007).

Jensen and Luthans (2006) acknowledged that the effect of gender required consideration, but did not explore employees' gendered translations of their entrepreneur-leaders to understand how women entrepreneur leaders were constructed and reconstructed, particularly as they note that there was a positive correlation between women employees, work happiness and gender. Jensen and Luthans (2006) highlight this as an area for further investigation; however, they only acknowledge gender as a variable in relation to explorations of difference and comparison. Further sex comparison studies would stagnate the gender and leadership literature at best, and at worst would signal a regression from the conceptual gender and leadership discussions encouraging scholars to 'unlearn' and 'rethink' (Mavin *et al.*, 2004) their approaches.

Research must move beyond sex differences and understand that men and women can, and do possess desirable leadership attributes (Ferrario, 1991) in order to break free from gendered dualistic thinking and disrupt masculine superiority within leadership and entrepreneurship. Alternatively, greater in-depth qualitative studies, applying gender as an analytical category would enable greater understanding of the gendered social practices at play. Jensen and Luthans (2006) themselves support further theory building to consider the implications that authentic leadership may offer entrepreneurs, calling for longitudinal research using observation and structured interviews specifically advocating the life history technique as a way of eliciting life trigger events which serve to not only aid the self-awareness of the leader in their authentic development but also enable further understandings of employees translation process.

Jensen and Luthans (2006) suggest further studies should explore how authentic leadership within entrepreneurial leadership impacts business performance, signifying their alignment within the binary and lack of intention to disrupt accepted economic understandings. The positivist approach Jensen and Luthans (2006) adopt in their study and suggest for further study, perpetuates gendered understandings of the masculine norm within leadership and entrepreneurship as they utilise masculine 'objective' tools to discover what is happening within the gender binary, without delving in greater depth to understand the socio-cultural influences of why it may be occurring.

Conventional entrepreneurship research has remained entrepreneur centric (Jensen and Luthans, 2006), therefore, analysing experiences of entrepreneurial leadership through authentic leadership will progress the emerging field's developments as the concept acknowledges follower involvement and agency, recognising it as social process.

Whilst Jensen and Luthans' (2006) study remains gender blind, measuring success in relation to masculine growth rationale, they do acknowledge the importance of employee perceptions (Jensen and Luthans, 2006), provide an important link to gender and have moved from conceptual thought to empirical findings. Further research from a gender perspective to understand how follower perceptions of women entrepreneurs are constructed and reconstructed in relation to their gender social role expectations as well as leader and entrepreneur expectations provides a contribution to entrepreneurial leadership. Jensen and Luthans' (2006) emphasis on employee translations therefore ignites the need to include gender within authentic leadership.

4.6 The Analytical Framework: Analysing Experiences of Gender within Entrepreneurial Leadership

Drawing upon O'Neil and Ucbasaran's (2010) contention that personal authenticity constraints within individuals' previous careers provide them with the motivation to enter entrepreneurship suggests that entrepreneurship offers opportunities for greater personal authenticity. Women may enter entrepreneurship to break free from the masculine norm which they are measured against in employment (Patterson and Mavin, 2009; Winn, 2004; Mattis, 2004; Orhan and Scott, 2001) and create a different norm. However, given the patriarchal backcloth and understanding of social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) in this thesis, achieving this is complex. Lewis (2009) argues that women business owners' authenticity varies in relation to their contextual sensitivity aligning with Levitt and Hiestand's argument that authenticity is an 'ongoing quest' and should be thought of as a continuum (Erickson, 1995).

This chapter has reviewed the emerging authentic leadership literature which has highlighted the gender blind nature of conceptual developments with the exception of Eagly's (2005) study, the lack of empirical studies and the appropriateness of empirically exploring authentic leadership from a small business context due to the simpler structures and close proximity between leaders and followers (Avolio *et al.*, 2004).

Eagly (2005) argues that women are denied the possibility of achieving relational authenticity within the gender binary and calls for greater consideration of leader and follower relationships. Authentic leadership is characterised by open and transparent relationships through trust, integrity and sharing leaders' life histories and values.

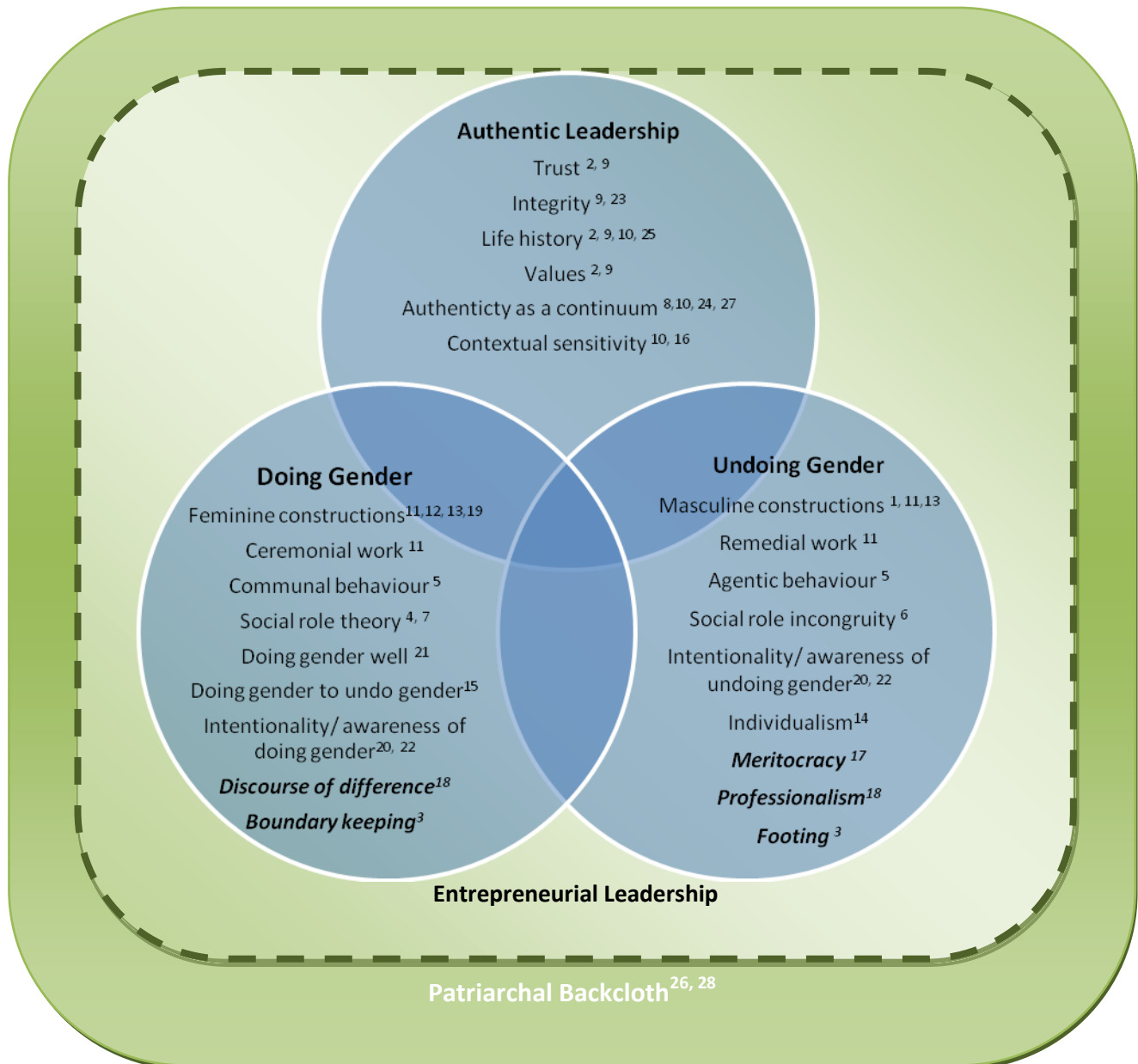
However, Ladkin and Taylor (2010) and Avolio *et al.*, (2004) highlight that the authentic leadership literature has not considered how assessments of authenticity are made by followers. Walumbwa *et al.*, (2008), George *et al.*, (2007) and Shamir and Eilam (2005) argue that authentic leadership should not be guided or influenced by social expectations. This is idealistic and impossible from a gender perspective given that against the patriarchal backcloth entrepreneurial leadership expectations and social role expectations are placed upon women (and men).

Exploring experiences of entrepreneurial leadership through authentic leadership is useful from a gender perspective as it provides space from which to reflect upon women's agency providing greater understandings of *how* women go against the main discursive practices of masculinity (Lewis, 2009), resulting in them being labelled as ineffectual (Mavin, 2009a) and furthermore, exploring *how* women sustain and reject masculinity, resulting in them being perceived negatively within the process of entrepreneurial leadership. Taking a gender perspective to an empirical study of authentic leadership would progress extant understandings of authentic leadership.

The importance of trust (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Gardner *et al.*, 2005), integrity (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Palanski and Yammarino, 2009), life history (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Gardner *et al.*, 2005; George *et al.*, 2007; Shamir and Eilam, 2005) and values (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Gardner *et al.*, 2005), are highlighted conceptually as key sources from which followers interpret their leaders' authenticity. Therefore, exploring how this emerges empirically will also provide a potential contribution. Furthermore understanding authenticity as a continuum (Erickson, 1995; George *et al.*, 2007; Roberts *et al.*, 2009; Tracy and Trethewey, 2005) which is contextually sensitive (George *et al.*, 2007; Levitt and Hiestand, 2004) challenges binary evaluations of authentic vs inauthentic to an understanding of being more or less authentic (Erickson, 1995). This understanding may also unsettle the gender binary as drawing upon Levitt and Hiestand's (2004) study, gender is understood to be negotiated dependent upon context and an individual's physical, emotional and social comfort.

Key areas from the three bodies of literature have been brought together to locate the study focus within the central overlap section (see figure 4.6b). This chapter completes the analytical framework developed in Chapters Two and Three by incorporating the authentic leadership theory base (see figure 4.6a).

The framework draws together the gender, women in leadership, female entrepreneurship and authentic leadership theory bases to inform the research approach and data analysis process of this thesis. This thesis offers a fusion of gender, entrepreneurship, authentic leadership research through a gender lens and offers an opportunity to conceptualise and empirically explore how gender is experienced from women entrepreneurs and followers perspectives to understand how the subjective individual makes sense of entrepreneurial leadership within the small firm context.



Alvesson and Due Billing (1997)¹; Avolio *et al.*, (2004)²; Bruni *et al.*, (2004a)³; Eagly, (1987)⁴; Eagly and Carli (2007)⁵; Eagly and Karau (2002)⁶; Eagly *et al.*, (2000)⁷; Erickson (1995)⁸; Gardner *et al.*, (2005)⁹; George *et al.*, (2007)¹⁰; Gherardi (1994)¹¹; Grant (1988)¹²; Hines, (1992)¹³; Kelan (2008¹⁴, 2010¹⁵); Levitt and Hiestand (2004)¹⁶; Lewis (2006¹⁷, 2009¹⁸); Marshall (1993)¹⁹; Martin (2006)²⁰; Mavin and Grandy (2010)²¹; Nencel (2010)²²; Palanski and Yammarino (2009)²³; Roberts *et al.*, (2009)²⁴; Shamir and Eilam (2005)²⁵; Simpson and Lewis (2005)²⁶; Tracy and Trethewey (2005)²⁷; Walby (1989)²⁸

Figure 4.6a Analytical Framework

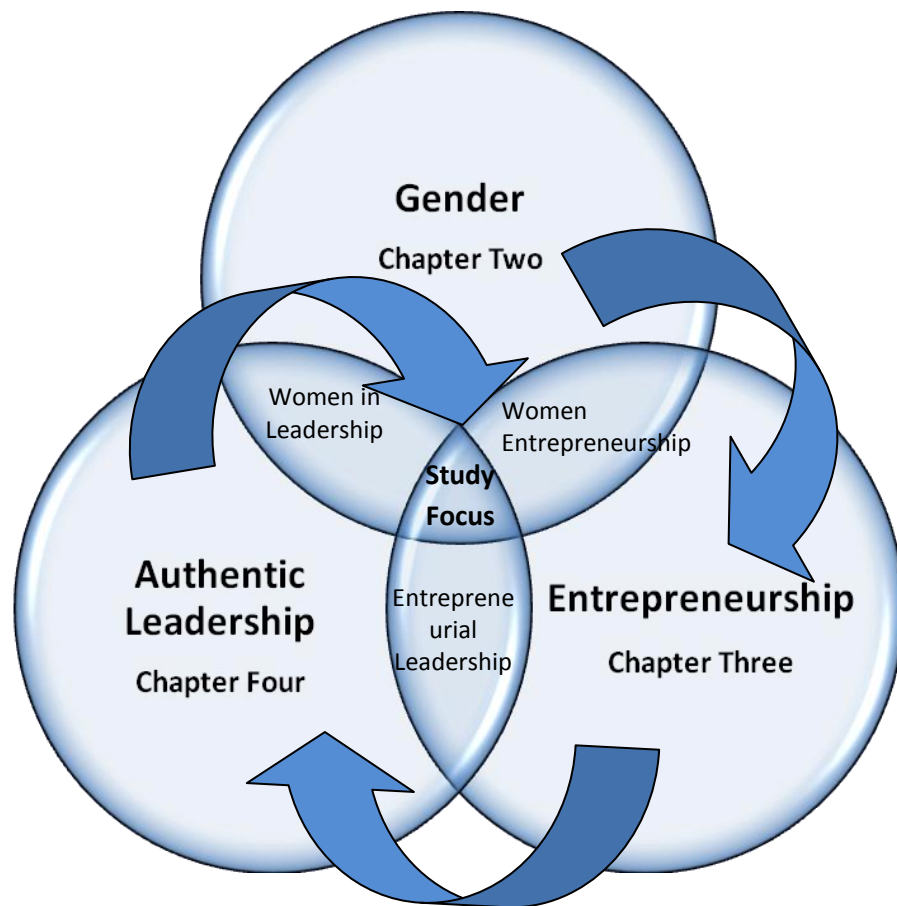


Figure 4.6a Conceptual Map

4.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter commenced with an introduction to the concept of authenticity and authentic leadership, highlighting its lack of empirical work and the need to develop the concept from a gender perspective. Drawing upon understandings of social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) outlined in Chapter Two, the need to acknowledge follower agency in relation to their gendered interpretations within the authentic leadership process was highlighted. Consequently, the importance and intertwined nature of building trust, integrity and authenticity with followers, along with the significance placed upon their interpretations of leaders' life stories within authentic leadership were then discussed. Understanding authentic leadership as a journey rather than an achieved state was then outlined, disrupting accepted understandings of performativity, which deny women authentic experiences. The small business context is then outlined as an appropriate site to empirically develop the authentic leadership field, highlighting the potential to explore the intersection of leadership and entrepreneurship through the concept, taking a gender perspective.

The final section of the chapter completes the analytical framework of this thesis drawing together the three areas of literature explored, to position the study focus and outline how the literature has informed the research approach in terms of design and analysis.

The chapter that follows introduces the epistemological and methodological approach taken in this study which has shaped the data collection and analysis.

Chapter Five

Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the feminist research approach taken in this thesis which has guided the methodological choices to collect and interpret empirical data enabling this study to address the research question: *'leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?'* The chapter contributes to the third research objective to: *'design an appropriate methodology to explore subjective experiences of women entrepreneurs and followers perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective'*. This will further support the development of the fourth research objective to: *'gather empirical data of women's experiences and followers perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership in small businesses.'*

The chapter commences by outlining the ontological position of pragmatic realism before discussing a paradigm of subjectivism which has shaped the feminist standpoint research approach (FSR) taken. The understanding of feminism and the feminist values taken within this thesis is then discussed. Feminist research is a personal experience for any researcher as she is required to be reflexive regarding the values she brings to the study as they are fundamental to the research focus and design (Peplau and Conrad, 1989; Cooper and Bosco, 1999). Consequently, the personal pronoun will be applied to reflect the importance of the researcher's situated knowledge (McCorkel and Myers, 2003). Since FSR's emergence, the epistemic stance has been subject to significant criticism, each criticism is addressed, highlighting how this has informed my epistemic stance, before discussing how the central tenets of FSR have shaped my methodological choices. The research strategy of this study is outlined before negotiating access is discussed. The data collection methods, data interpretation approach and importance of reflexivity are addressed before the ethical implications of the study are discussed.

5.2 Ontological Position: Pragmatic Realism

The ontological position of this thesis draws upon Watson's (2011) understanding of pragmatic realism. This acknowledges that there are no absolute truths, but relative truths with reality understood to emerge from human practices. Watson (2011: 208) contends that:

pragmatic realism accepts the importance of processes of social construction, researcher interpretation, narrative/discursive framing, and all the rest, without denying that there are realities which exist in the social world independently of the way they are observed or interpreted.

This pluralistic and anti-reductionist understanding of pragmatic realism aligns with key understandings of patriarchy and agency drawn upon in this thesis. Given the understanding of a patriarchal backcloth in this thesis (as an aspect of social reality) against which many social constructions are made and interpreted, a patriarchal backcloth precedes individual choice and provides the background from which individuals may then have an active role (Linstead and Thomas, 2001). Individuals' agency, understood to be their independent behaviour and decisions to comply or resist gender norms (Martin, 2006), is therefore appreciated to be set against a backcloth of patriarchy. Furthermore, Watson (2011: 209) highlights the value of pragmatic realism in that it is concerned with how people learn the ropes to understand the "roles, rules, norms, unofficial practices, politics, discourses and cultures" shaping entrepreneurial leadership in a small business context. My alignment with a subjectivist paradigm is discussed in the next section.

5.3 Subjectivism

In this section I outline my understanding and identification with a paradigm of subjectivism, which has shaped the feminist research approach taken within this thesis. As outlined in Chapter One, the research focus has emerged through my personal interest in female entrepreneurship and gender, developed from my family, education and work experiences and further supported by the under researched gendered nature of entrepreneurship (Marlow *et al.*, 2009). Brooks and Hesse-Biber (2007) support the assertion that a researcher's lived experience should be embraced to gain new insights, understandings and generate new knowledge. Subjectivism also enables me to acknowledge and transparently relate my own subjectivity as a co-constructer of meaning as I represent experiences of gender within the process of entrepreneurial leadership within the research process (Thomas and Linstead, 2002).

My own lived realities are unavoidably interwoven within the analysis, therefore remaining reflexively vigilant enables understandings of how I facilitate or impede different voices emerging (McCorkel and Myers, 2003).

Subjectivism is understood within this thesis to be how individuals ascribe meaning to the everyday world that they experience; that reality is a product of one's mind (Burrell and Morgan 1979). Knowledge is understood to be a personal experience (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) therefore there is not 'a' universal truth, but many truths. Subjectivity is understood to be "personal, intuitive knowledge that comes from the consciousness of a knowing subject situated in a specific social context" (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2004:52) highlighting the fluidity required in understanding subjectivity. The understanding of a subjective individual within this thesis is that an individual's experience is central to meaning construction. Through an individual's construction and reconstruction, reality is what the beholder perceives it to be (Holden and Lynch, 2004; Morgan and Smircich 1980). Understanding a subjective individual in this way enables the (un)doing of gender to be explored, providing further understandings of why women go against the main discursive practice of entrepreneurship (Lewis, 2009). As Crotty (1998: 28) states "the scientific world is not, of course, the everyday world that people experience" therefore it is imperative that the focus of the study is to understand how *subjective* individuals make sense of their experiences. However, whilst recognising individual agency in relation to (un)doing of gender is important, "the hold our culture has on us" (Crotty, 1998: 58) must also be acknowledged. In the context of this thesis social structures of patriarchy, which is believed to provide an understanding to everyday lives, should be recognised.

The epistemological aim is to understand the lived experiences of women entrepreneurs and their followers' perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership, enabling both to be grounded socially and culturally, to construct and reconstruct their subjective understandings. Understanding the lived experiences of individuals through a paradigm of subjectivism enables further understandings of gender within a process of entrepreneurial leadership to be explored. The concern of this study is to explore in depth what the subjective individual experiences, requiring feminist researchers to listen more carefully and take more seriously what women and men share about their lives to understand women's oppression and inequalities (Stanley and Wise, 1993). By "drawing on personal knowledge, in the light of feminist theory, allows women to express their experiences of living gendered lives in conditions of social inequality" (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2004:52). The feminist standpoint approach taken within this research is explored within the following section.

5.4 Feminist Standpoint Research

Drawing upon the need for a gender perspective within the entrepreneurial leadership context and authentic leadership development framework highlighted in Chapter Four, a feminist research approach is drawn upon to explore the gendered social order and enable social and political change (Crasnow, 2008; Brooks, 2007; Fonow and Cook, 2005; Hurley 1999). Enabling such change will attempt to disrupt masculine hierarchical superiority (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004), by offering understandings of the subjective perspectives of women participants and their followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership. Feminism is explored to provide an understanding of the feminist ontology that I bring to this research.

Feminism encompasses a diverse range of beliefs, practices and political agendas that are continually debated and disputed (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2004; Griffin, 1995). I offer my own understanding of feminism which underpins this research approach and has ultimately shaped this thesis.

Women have inherited perceptions of "what it means to be a woman and how women ought to live and act" (Crotty, 1998: 179). I believe feminism seeks to give women the power denied by patriarchal society, to enable them to "contextualise [their] lives and explain the constraints" (Nicolson, 1996: 23). By bringing women's consciousness into being (Collins, 1997) the established gender social order can be challenged (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) to create new knowledge towards cultivating social and political change (Crasnow, 2008; Brooks, 2007; Fonow and Cook, 2005; Hurley, 1999).

As Brooks (2007) asserts, only by placing women at the heart of research can you provide them with the space to reflect and articulate their "concrete experiences" (Collins, 1990: 209), to uncover aspects of the social order that have been ignored and overlooked (Buzzanell, 2003).

Given my understanding of feminism outlined above, I therefore bring a "feminist consciousness" (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 43) to this research as I view reality differently (Stanley and Wise, 1993) from mainstream objectivist ontology. As Stanley and Wise (1993: 119) contend:

women's experiences constitute a different view of reality, an entirely different 'ontology' or way of going about making sense of the world. In other words we shall suggest, 'feminist consciousness' makes available to us a previously untapped store of knowledge about what it is to be a woman, what the social world looks like to women, how it is constructed and negotiated by women.

The feminist consciousness that I bring to this research offers an alternative “seat of experience and thus of theory and knowledge” (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 192) of the social world, rooted within cultural contexts. My feminist consciousness rejects gendered terms and the gender binary which “sees all reality as characterized as two opposing principles, those of masculinity and femininity” (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 194). Women (and men) are not homogenous groups (Crotty, 1998) but:

‘the self’ is the production of interaction and social construction and is irrevocably social and cultural in its basis...‘the self’ is experienced as in stasis – ‘this is me’ – at any one point in time

(Stanley and Wise, 1993: 194).

This understanding aligns with the social construction of gender, the doing and undoing of gender outlined in Chapter Two (see Section 2.2.2 for understandings of gender and Section 2.2.3 for the gender we do) which recognises masculinities and femininities as subjectivities (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997) to enable social flux across the two symbolic spaces (Gherardi, 1994), to address the research question of Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?

I moved from understanding my feminist ontology, to align myself with a feminist epistemology to identify what I understand by the nature of knowledge - “how we know, what we know” (Crotty, 1998: 8).

5.4.1 Feminist Standpoint Theory

I explored Tong's (1989) seven feminisms; liberal, Marxists, radical, psychoanalytic, socialist, existentialist and post-modern. However, like many other feminists I found such labelling limiting and characteristically masculine (Stanley and Wise, 1993). It contravenes the essence of feminist values by adhering to the masculine ideal of setting parameters, and therefore bounding feminism. There are many feminisms, and I understand that feminists “make sense of the world in a myriad of ways” (Crotty, 1998: 160).

Consequently, I began to identify with Feminist Standpoint Theory's (Harding, 1991; 2007b; Hartsock, 1997; Hekman, 1997a; Collins, 1990; Buzzanell, 2003; McCorkel and Myers, 2003; Brooks, 2007; Crasnow, 2008) emphasis on situated knowledge (Naples, 2007) acknowledging the contextual fluidity aligned with the concept of authentic leadership within this thesis (see Chapter Three for further discussion).

Standpoint theories can be described in general terms as “technical theoretical devices that can allow for the creation of accounts of society that can be used to work for more satisfactory social relations” (Hartsock, 1997: 370). FSR emerged during the 1970s and 1980s following Marxist feminism debates (Harding, 2007b; Naples, 2007), as parallels between gender and class were drawn upon. Feminist scholars identified the need to focus research on the oppression rooted within women's everyday lives (Hekman, 1997a). This enabled the adjoinment of feminist and political concerns (Naples, 2007) to understand and accurately explain women's experiences. FSR, therefore, provides a broad category to describe a number of feminist scholars whose research emphasises situated knowledge (Naples, 2007) and highlight that there are many standpoints from which knowledge can be produced and be empirically accurate and legitimate knowledge claims (Hekman, 1997a; McCorkel and Myers, 2003).

Harding, (2007b: 45) outlines the early goals of FSR which centred upon (1) explaining in a more accurate way relations between androcentric institutional power and the production of sexist and androcentric knowledge claims, (2) accounting for the surprising successes of research in the social sciences and biology that were overtly guided by feminist politics, (3) provide guidelines for future research, and (4) provide a resource for the empowerment of oppressed groups.

However, following FSR's emergence, criticism began to build impetus during the 1980s resulting in the relative disappearance of FSR discussions during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Naples, 2007). This has been attributable to its Marxist roots on structural reform (Crotty, 1998) being widely discredited and FSR being opposed to the most significant influences of contemporary feminist theory; postmodernism and post structuralism (Naples, 2007). This denigration has left young feminists viewing FSR as “a quaint relic of feminism's less sophisticated past” (Hekman, 1997a: 341). However, after almost two decades of controversy, FSR debate and discussion re-emerged (Hekman, 1997b; see *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 1997: 22(2)) experiencing a re-growth as scholars responded to criticisms of positivism, postmodernism, relativism, essentialism and privileging women's way of knowing, (see *Table 5.4.1 below for a summary of arguments and FSR responses*), with epistemic revisions and re-articulations (Harding, 2007b).

I share Hekman's (1997a) concern that through complete relativism we lose the ability to speak from any specific group or category and consequently eliminate the possibility of political activism, which is at the heart of FSR. However, as Buzzanell (2003) suggests, the aim is to develop feminist agendas by making sense of commonalities of women's lives without denying diversity (Stanley and Wise, 1993). Hekman (1997a) contends that FSR raises important questions of political and theoretical significance to the contemporary feminist movement (Naples, 2007), with situated knowledge providing the foundation to begin political debates. As Naples (2007) argues that FSR's reflexive stance, openness to debate and revision has enabled the theory to come back and answer its critics; remaining buoyant in 21st century feminism.

Therefore Harding (1991) argues, understanding women's views of their lives is what grounds FSR. Impartiality was not deemed to be problematic for men conducting research with all men samples to generate knowledge (Harding, 2007b), therefore, given this point and that all knowledge is socially situated (Hartsock, 1997; Smith, 1987; Harding 1991; Collins 1990; McCorkel and Myers, 2003) an all women sample should not be perceived to be problematic. However, Harding and Norberg (2005) assert that dominant groups are unable to recognise oppressive characteristics of their own beliefs and practices. FSR has the potential to highlight and challenge dominant conceptual frameworks of gender relations providing "a methodological resource for explicating how relations of domination contour women's everyday lives" (Naples, 2007: 580). Its concern lies with locating standpoints in specific communities, owing much attention to the interconnectivity of gender, race and class (Harding, 1997; Naples, 2007). Positivism's approach in dealing with gender, race and class as independent discrete variables (Naples, 2007) commonplace in the entrepreneurship literature (see section 3.2.2 for further discussion), neglects the social context and standpoint of the researcher. This is frustrating for feminist researchers as it fails to acknowledge *how* their standpoint has shaped the research decisions (develop research questions, conduct the fieldwork and interpret findings) and knowledge production (McCorkel and Myers, 2003).

Table 5.4.1a Feminist Standpoint Theory Criticisms and Responses

CRITIQUE	CHALLENGE	FEMINIST STANDPOINT RESPONSE
Positivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSR contravenes the value free and culture free principles of conventional science; deemed to be 'good' research (Harding and Norberg, 2005) FSR scholars have typically conducted research that is similar to their own lived experiences, therefore failing to create the distance required between researcher and research participant (Harding, 2007b) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impartiality was not deemed to be problematic for men conducting research on other men Harding (2007b) FSR contends that all knowledge is socially situated (Hartsock, 1997; Smith, 1987; Harding, 1991; Collins, 1990; McCorkel and Myers, 2003), therefore there can never be one, objective truth or knowledge claim (McCorkel and Myers, 2003)
Postmodernism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presumption of identifying and locating a socially constructed position is impossible and that standpoint epistemology is a science in search of truth (Naples, 2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harding (1997) suggests that truth claims are harmless so long as their claims remain within the bounds of the evidence provided Naples (2007) raises concerns over postmodernism's textual focus, which she believes renders the lived realities of women as irrelevant. Both Hekman (1997a) and Naples (2007) share the concern of losing the ability to speak from any specific group or category resulting in complete relativism, eliminating the possibility of political activism, at the heart of FSR
Relativism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The multiplicity of standpoints is a major problem for FSR as we are unable to talk about accounts of the world if standpoints are endless (Hekman, 1997a) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buzzanell (2003) suggests that the aim is to develop feminist agendas by making sense of the commonalities of women's lives without denying the differences between and amongst women (Stanley and Wise, 1993) Standpoint refers to historic group based experiences as groups share a permanence over time within which their group experiences go beyond any individual ones (Collins, 1997) Using 'group' as a focal point creates the possibility for individual agency (Collins, 1997) Fluidity increases its sophistication (Collins, 1997) enables a more comprehensive understanding of how institutional power may change and continue to reproduce gender, race and class inequalities
Essentialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early FSR writings predominated around white women's lives with the presumption that all women (and men) shared the same experiences (Harding, 2007b) Whilst differences were acknowledged, similarities were focused upon (Harding, 2007b) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSR scholars acknowledge the differences between and amongst women through situated knowledge (Naples, 2007) However, Weeks (1998: 8) highlights that FSR is "an achieved, constructed collectivity" that contributes to feminist political goals, therefore FSR is achieved through the analysis of collective viewpoints and conversations within communities
Privileging a Woman's Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women's way of knowing is automatically privileged (Flax, 1990) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women's experiences do not equate to knowledge (Harding, 2007b) but have the potential to access new knowledge (Smith, 1997)

Naples (2007) identifies three general approaches to the construction of FSR; (1) embodied in women's social location and experience, (2) constructed in the community and (3) as a site through which to begin inquiry. In the first instance, FSR is viewed as embodied in social actors, seeking to understand those actors situated in less privileged positions and their subsequent activities which are unlike others located in more privileged positions. Within the context of this study, understandings of entrepreneurial leadership built upon masculine foundations position women entrepreneur leaders in a less privileged position. Naples (2007) identifies that critics of standpoint theory more generally draw attention to the reliance of marginal groups such as women, to have a defining standpoint which has led to claims of essentialism, a criticism which is addressed above (see Table 5.3.1). The second approach understands FSR as a relational accomplishment created as part of a specific community (Naples, 2007). Collins' (1990) work on black feminist thought highlights the collective process whereby individuals represent themselves in relation to others within the community. She asserts that standpoint is thereby constructed through shared historic experiences (Collins, 1997).

Naples (2007) problematises the shared group approach, as class and race are used to identify group membership. The third approach highlighted by Naples (2007) does not append standpoint to bodies, individuals, groups or communities, rather it attempts to capture fluidity by beginning inquiry through an active knower, engaged and connected to others in identifiable ways without privileging a subject of research that is disconnected from her social location and daily activities (Smith, 1987). Naples (2007) argues that this approach is most linked to Smith's (1987) everyday world sociology providing a framework for capturing the interactive and fluid conceptualisation of community without attaching a particular knowledge claim to individual knowers or specific communities or groups. Given the subjectivist understanding within this thesis I draw upon Naples' (2007) first approach to FSR focused on women's social location and experience. The table below (Table 5.3.1b) outlines how principles of FSR have been operationalised within the study in line with Naples' (2007) approach focused on women's social location.

In response to the significant criticism FSR has received, positionality (McCorkel and Myers, 2003) is introduced as an approach to explore and understand situated knowledge claims.

CRITIQUE CHALLENGE	FEMINIST STANDPOINT RESPONSE	How Feminist Standpoint responses are operationalised within the study
Positivism argument that FSR contravenes the value free and culture free principles of conventional science (Harding and Norberg, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impartiality was not deemed to be problematic for men conducting research on other men Harding (2007b) • FST contends that all knowledge is socially situated (Hartsock, 1997 Smith, 1987; Harding, 1991; Collins, 1990; McCorkel and Myers; 2003), therefore there can never be one, objective truth or knowledge claim (McCorkel and Myers, 2003) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim of the study was to provide understandings of perceptions of the entrepreneurial leadership process for women, in order to give women the space to voice their experiences located within their specific context therefore a life history approach was taken to enable the women entrepreneurs to construct and reconstruct their experiences enabling many truths and knowledge claims to emerge. • I do not assume to be an objective value free researcher, sharing my social context with the reader in Section 1.2 and that of my research participants to convey my positionality.
Postmodern argument that standpoint epistemology is a science in search of truth (Naples, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harding (1997) suggests that truth claims are harmless so long as their claims remain within the bounds of the evidence provided • Naples (2007) raises concerns over postmodernism's textual focus, which she believes renders the lived realities of women as irrelevant. Both Hekman (1997a) and Naples (2007) share the concern of losing the ability to speak from any specific group or category resulting in complete relativism, eliminating the possibility of political activism, at the heart of FST 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and conclusions within the study are drawn from follower and/or women entrepreneurs' data providing evidence to support any knowledge claims. • During the first stage analysis process (see Table 5.7.2b) I also reflected upon the interpretations I made in relation to my own values, assumptions and beliefs to ensure that my own positionality was not being prioritised above the evidence provided by the study. • This study places great emphasis upon the need for political activism therefore categories of commonalities are drawn upon within the analysis to identify some discourses which shape experiences and expectations of entrepreneurial leadership for women. • In terms of political activism I have discussed and presented my research within the academic community at the Northern Leadership Academy Doctoral Fellows Conference (2007), UFHRD Conference (2008; 2009), British Academy of Management Conference (2008; 2009). I have also delivered my research as a guest lecture for undergraduate and MBA programmes.

Relativist argument that we are unable to talk about the world if standpoints are endless (Hekman, 1997a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buzzanell (2003) suggests that the aim is to develop feminist agendas by making sense of the commonalities of women's lives without denying the differences between and amongst women (Stanley and Wise, 1993) • Standpoint refers to historic group based experiences as groups share a permanence over time within which their group experiences go beyond any individual ones (Collins, 1997) Using 'group' as a focal point creates the possibility for individual agency (Collins, 1997) • Fluidity increases its sophistication (Collins, 1997) and enables a more comprehensive understanding of how institutional power may change and continue to reproduce gender, race and class inequalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within my authorial strategy (see Section 5.6.2) a process of comparison was introduced within the analysis as individual participant data was analysed across participants' themes to produce categories of experiences and expectations identifying areas of commonality enabling the women's voices to speak from their entrepreneurial leadership standpoints
Essentialist argument that all women shared the same experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FST scholars acknowledge the differences between and amongst women through situated knowledge (Naples, 2007) • However, Weeks (1998: 8) highlights that FSR is "an achieved, constructed collectivity" that contributes to feminist political goals, therefore FSR is achieved through the analysis of collective viewpoints and conversations within communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study acknowledges that each of the women entrepreneurs have different career, family and personal backgrounds, operating their businesses in different sectors, which they have set up and run for different lengths of time outlined within their mini biographies • The study acknowledges that all of the women entrepreneur participants are white • The study offers <i>some</i> discourses to surface some of the possible processes at work within entrepreneurial leadership to provide further understandings of experiences and expectations of the process • Analysing across the voices of followers and the women entrepreneurs achieves Weeks' (1998: 8) "constructed collectivity" within the community of women entrepreneurs and their followers to achieve political goals
Privileging a Woman's Way of knowing is automatically privileged (Flax, 1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's experiences do not equate to knowledge (Harding, 2007b) but have the potential to access new knowledge (Smith, 1997) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intention of this research is not to change the social order by usurping masculinity with femininity but to create another space to provide further understandings of entrepreneurial leadership experiences for women

Table 5.4.1b How Feminist Standpoint Research has been operationalised within the study

5.4.2 Positionality

Positionality is understood to be a process by which researchers make their assumptions, motivations, narratives and relations transparent (McCorkel and Myers, 2003).

Positionality forces feminist scholars to confront their socially situated selves in order to be aware of how they have facilitated and impeded different voices and understandings, to enable us to “open up space for critical dialogue with research subjects” (McCorkel and Myers, 2003: 228). Given FSR’s assertion that all knowledge is socially situated, it seems perfectly legitimate that scholars explain their social location and context within which knowledge claims are produced, (McCorkel and Myers, 2003).

Positionality assists in the achievement of what Harding (1991) originally referred to as ‘strong objectivity’, understood as a process by which cultural and societal assumptions regarding the nature of the social world are recognised (McCorkel and Myers, 2003). Given the location of this research within a paradigm of subjectivism, the language of the label ‘strong objectivity’ (Harding, 1991) jolts with my ontological and epistemological beliefs within a subjectivist paradigm, therefore I instead draw upon ‘strong reflexivity’ which Brooks and Hesse-Biber (2007: 15) suggest illuminates ‘strong objectivity’ through methods and resonates more comfortably with my “feminist emphasis on situated knowledge”. Strong reflexivity “requires the researcher to be cognizant and critically reflective about the different ways her positionality can serve as both a hindrance and a resource toward achieving knowledge” (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007: 15). McCorkel and Myers (2003) use the metaphor of a stage to explain how strong reflexivity can be achieved. They outline the need for feminist researchers to make visible their ‘backstage’ and understand how data and analysis are shaped by scholars’ relations with research participants, the situatedness of the researcher and the context of discovery (McCorkel and Myers, 2003). Engaging in a reflexive process aims to disrupt the dominant social arrangements of gender, class and race and to explore the effect of so-called ‘master narratives’ (McCorkel and Myers, 2003).

McCorkel and Myers (2003: 203) argue scholars must “subject themselves to the same level of scrutiny they direct toward the subjects of their inquiry”. McCorkel and Myers (2003) therefore suggest that scholars present the research results to the community concerned and that the researcher is placed on the same critical plane to achieve this. By engaging in such a process I am encouraged to continually reflect back on my study to explore how my social location and cultural assumptions have positioned and privileged me, shaping the structure and substance of the research (McCorkel and Myers, 2003; Harding 1991).

Harding (2007b) proposes four ways that feminist theorists should consider when being reflexive to ensure their knowledge claims are believable; 1) how knowledge has been produced, 2) why the chosen methods were selected, 3) the power differentials between research participants and the researcher, and 4) providing guidelines for future research. Table 5.4.2 below outlines how Harding's (2007b) four considerations for strong reflexivity are achieved within this study.

Achieving Strong Reflexivity (Harding, 2007b)	How this is operationalised within the thesis
How knowledge has been produced	Transparently convey how data was analysed within section 5.7 Data Interpretation
Why the chosen methods were selected	Justifying method selection is discussed in Section 5.6 Data Collection Methods
Power differentials between research participants and the researcher	Considerations are discussed in Section 5.9 discussing research ethics and methodological reflexivity section in the concluding Chapter Eight
Providing guidelines for future research	This is discussed within methodological reflexivity section in the concluding Chapter Eight

Table 5.4.2 Operationalising Strong Reflexivity

Conversations centred upon 'strong reflexivity' provides the opportunity to identify and challenge master narratives³ that we use to make sense of our world in our situated knowledge because ultimately they still shape how we have "edited, silenced, evaluated, and categorized. Such practices are unavoidable in crafting sociological analyses" (McCorkel and Myers, 2003: 229). However, by locating my positionality through strong reflexivity I have the potential to make credible (feminist) knowledge claims which have the potential to challenge gendered understandings and explore the effects of a patriarchal backcloth.

³ Master narratives originate from dominant groups and operate to legitimise and naturalise the order of things. They become how they see the world and by implication our research subjects (McCorkel and Myers, 2003)

5.4.3 My Feminist Standpoint

My understanding of FSR is that “women speak from multiple standpoints, producing multiple knowledges, without preventing women from coming together to work for specific political goals” (Hekman, 1997a: 363). I also find reassurance from Harding (2007b: 62) regarding the ambiguity and tension within and between the debates and discussions of FSR as “it addresses and tries to resolve some of the most puzzling and anxiety-producing issues confronting thoughtful people in today’s world.”

I place emphasis in exploring how my positionality (Hesse Biber, 2007; McCorkel and Myers, 2003) has permeated my research and knowledge production process, understanding my selection and writing and whose voices I have silenced and suppressed (McCorkel and Myers, 2003; Harding, 1997). Consequently, applying a feminist perspective to existing methodologies has shaped the research design, ethics, data collection and analysis in a way that is distinctly different from mainstream objectivist epistemologies, as it is more useful than any other in understanding women’s social realities (Fonow and Cook, 1991) by placing their experiences at the heart of the research (Brooks, 2007). The inclusion of a feminist orientation “transforms these common methodologies and methods and sets them apart” (Crotty, 1998: 182) enabling the application of new knowledge towards cultivating social change (Brooks, 2007). I now move to describe how FSR has specifically shaped my methodological choices as for FSR “how research is conducted and to what purpose” is most important (Pillow and Mayo, 2007: 157).

5.5 Methodological Choices

In line with the research objective to *‘design an appropriate research approach to explore subjective experiences of leaders’ and follower’s experience of gender within the process of entrepreneurial leadership in small businesses’*, I designed a methodology through my feminist lens (Pillow and Mayo, 2007). The sections that follow discuss the appropriateness of discourse and adoption of case studies to my research approach.

5.5.1 Discourse

Discourse goes further than simply describing the social world; discourses constitute the social world through the categorisation of phenomena to make sense of the meaning of reality (Hardy and Phillips, 2004). Discourses are “viewed as an inherent part of socio-cultural practices of ‘doing’ gender embedded within social contexts” (Pesonen *et al.*, 2009: 330).

Foucauldian understanding of discourse moves beyond ‘language’ to include an interrelated understanding of knowledge, social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations (Prichard *et al.*, 2004). Foucauldian understanding of discourse is viewed as a “framework and a logic of reasoning that, through its penetration of social practice, systematically forms its objects than as any use of language in a social context” (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2002: 224). However, as Prichard *et al.*, (2004: 222) state, Foucauldian discourse “is not easy to operationalise”.

The concern of this thesis is how discourses shape our thinking, attitudes and behaviour (Simpson and Lewis, 2007; Gannon and Davies, 2007), supporting understandings of what modes of thinking and behaviour are deemed to be acceptable (Simpson and Lewis, 2005; Gannon and Davies, 2007). Discourse provides “the conditions of possibility that determine what can be said, by whom and when” (Hardy and Phillips, 2004: 301) creating truth effects (Kelan, 2008).

Given the FSR approach taken within this thesis, a central concern is “how patriarchal and male-centred ways of looking at the world are communicated via discourse, including language, symbols, ideology” (Leavy, 2007: 91). Consequently the understanding of discourse that I bring to this thesis is of a “social arena in which common understandings are manifest in language, social practices and structures” (Fletcher 1999: 143) of both private and public spaces (Gherardi, 1994). The fluidity of discourse is also acknowledged:

Discourses are complex interconnected webs of modes of being, thinking and acting. They are in constant flux and often contradictory. They are always located on temporal and spatial axes; thus they are historically and culturally specific

(Gannon and Davies 2007: 82)

Aligned with understandings of authenticity, and masculinities and femininities as subjectivities (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997), recognising the contextual nature of discourse is important in understanding discourse within this study. Sunderland (2007: 209) suggests that “we are aware (though we may not articulate it like this), of drawing on discourses at different times and different situations”. This understanding recognises the intertwined nature of individual agency and discourse to understand how an individual may draw upon a number of discourses at the same time (Sunderland, 2007), or, similarly resist them.

Creating space for resistance creates ‘discursive space’ for alternate discourses to emerge, which Sunderland (2007) refers to as discursive contradictions. In creating such discursive space, dominant discourses can be dislodged “long enough to create, at least theoretically, a place where new things can be said and new social structures envisioned” (Fletcher 1999: 24; Weedon, 1997). The purpose is not to substitute truth claims of one discourse with another, rather, to surface complexities and tension, to discuss and question underlying assumptions and enable new ways of thinking to emerge (Fletcher 1999). Weedon (1997) suggests discourses of feminism can produce discursive space, creating possibilities for dominant discourses to be challenged, contradicted (Sunderland, 2007) or reversed (Weedon, 1997). Consequently, the FSR approach taken within this thesis provides an opportunity to explore such discursive instability which has the potential for social change (Sunderland, 2004).

However, whilst I agree with Sunderland (2007) that at times individuals will intentionally draw upon discourses, acknowledging their agency, drawing upon the gender literature review in Chapter Two, there will similarly be non-reflexive practice (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010). The resources women draw upon unreflexively (Martin, 2006) will support understandings of how we “have come to develop deeply entrenched habits of thought which unnecessarily circumscribed the possibilities for action” (Chia, 2000: 517) within the context of entrepreneurial leadership.

I recognise that whilst I am taking a FSR approach in this study I draw upon feminist post structuralist scholars; Fletcher (1999); Sunderland (2007) and Weedon (1997) to construct my understanding of discourse in this thesis. To explain the appropriateness of this merging I draw upon Hekman’s (1997a) contention that the main distinction between post structuralism and FSR has almost been eradicated as Harding’s writings have blurred the boundaries as she advocates a post structuralist standpoint proposing a “remapping the epistemic terrain into numerous fluid conversations” (Code, 1991: 309).

For my thesis it is a matter of emphasis, I align with Hekman (1997a) and Haraway's (1988) argument that there are many standpoints therefore bringing research to any meaningful conclusion would be unfeasible given post structuralisms multiplicity of standpoints. Furthermore whilst I understand and appreciate post structuralisms textual focus I also agree with Naples' (2007) concern of an over emphasis on text which she believes renders the lived realities of women as irrelevant.

The concern of my FSR approach is for a textual focus without losing the ability to speak from any specific group resulting in complete relativism, eliminating the possibility of political activism, at the heart of FST (Hekman, 1997a; Naples, 2007). Therefore my FSR approach is concerned with "more than changing 'the language game'" (Collins, 1997: 381) to place emphasis on political action (Harding, 2007b) given my frustrations with my own experiences (outlined in Chapter One) which brought me to this research and serves as my own resistance strategy.

The aim is to understand the gender practices individuals engage with intentionally (Nencel, 2010) and non-reflexively (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010) to understand how women (un)do gender within the process of entrepreneurial leadership to construct themselves and others (Potter and Wetherall, 1995) within spoken and non spoken discourses.

5.5.2 Case Studies

A case study approach was adopted owing to it producing rich data and a flexible approach to understanding how process and context influence (Hartley, 2004) entrepreneurial leadership experiences. Five case studies were adopted consisting of an individual woman entrepreneur, (placing their lived experiences at the heart of the study), and an associated follower to acknowledge entrepreneurial leadership as a process.

Given the in-depth, exploratory qualitative approach taken within this study, a small sample was deemed appropriate. The feminist goal of this study is to "look at a 'process' or the 'meanings' individuals attribute to their given social situation, not necessarily to make generalizations" (Hesse-Biber, 2007: 119). Eisenhardt (1989b) recommends that qualitative research should include between four and ten cases, while Trigwell (2000) suggests 15 interviews provide an adequate sample, and Dahlgren (1995) and McCracken (1988) stating that ten and eight interviews respectively, capture sufficient difference.

Five individual case studies incorporating two interview stages for both five women entrepreneurs and their five followers were drawn upon to explore the research question 'leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced?'.

Multiple individual case studies were used to highlight the contextual differences specific to individual cases providing a "vicarious experience from which the reader may learn" (Lincoln and Guba, 1990: 54) and enabling cross case readings to identify any similarities and cross checking of findings (Eisenhardt, 1989b; Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995).

Furthermore, Flyvbjerg (2004) contends that in depth contextual detail generated through individual case studies supports the development of more general knowledge, which, within the context of the under researched gendered nature of entrepreneurship (Marlow *et al.*, 2009) will further understandings of female entrepreneurship processes more generally.

Congruent with Yin's (1994) definition of case studies, multiple methods were also employed in order to capture the complexity of entrepreneurial leadership experiences, grounding the research historically, socially and culturally. Semi structured interviews, research diaries and participant observation were implemented. Employing a number of data collection methods also enabled the development of the researcher-research participant relationship as different contact was made over a longer period of time resulting in more in-depth data being collected in comparison to a one off intervention (Hartley, 2004).

5.6 Identifying Participants and Negotiating Access

In this section the sampling approach taken is explained before discussing the issues of negotiating access.

Purposive sampling was adopted as I actively sought case organisations led by women entrepreneurs. The following criteria were applied; (1) woman was the founder and owner manager; (2) the business employed between 5-50 people (Companies Act 2006); (3) the business had been trading for three years or more and (4) and a geographic constraint that the business was located within the North East of England.

Given the understanding of entrepreneurial leadership as a social process I felt such rich experiences were most likely to occur in organisations where the woman had been trading for at least three years enabling her time to grow sufficiently to have a group of employees to lead and select from to take part in the research. The importance of the woman being a founder is how I interpret entrepreneurial leadership centred upon the leadership skills demanded to set up and run a business. However, the purposive sampling approach did not generate substantial interest to gain the desired ten case studies, therefore, I moved to convenience sampling when negotiating access began.

I began to negotiate access in December 2007 with access to the fifth and final case agreed in May 2008. I firstly approached at the organisational level through discussion with the woman entrepreneur. Using the above selection criteria identified, I compiled a list of twenty women entrepreneurs drawn from my personal network of contacts or regionally known women entrepreneur role models to attempt to obtain a representative sample of women entrepreneurs from the North East in terms of the sector they operated within, their age category and ethnicity. Each was sent an email introducing myself as an academic researcher, clearly outlining the aim of my Doctoral research with a description of the research stages and highlighting approximate time commitments for each stage. In the emails, I also stated a specific date that I would follow up my email with a telephone call to enable me to explain my research in more detail and allow the women to ask any questions. Those who did not wish to receive a telephone call replied to my email declining participation due to the time commitment required. I made an assumption that those with whom I had an established professional relationship would be more willing and comfortable to participate. However, none of the women I knew prior to contacting agreed to participate with the main reason cited as being unable to commit to the time requirements of study. Table 5.6a outlines the research decisions, actions and outcomes in three stages of negotiating access.

STAGE 1	1.1 Research Decision	Taking a purposive sampling approach I identify the selection criteria of women entrepreneur leaders
	1.2 Action	I compiled a list of women entrepreneurs within my network of contacts and desk research of local women only networks that met identified selection criteria and emailed requesting their participation
	1.3 Outcome	Two positive responses within the selection criteria One positive response outside of the selection criteria
STAGE 2	2.1 Research Decision	Insufficient number of responses taking purposive sampling approach. An alternative method of contact is required
	2.2 Action	Move to convenience sampling, disseminating an e-advert calling for women entrepreneurs within the selection criteria amongst regional women only networks
	2.3 Outcome	Two positive responses but neither with three years or more of trading
STAGE 3	3.1 Research Decision	Relax selection criteria moving to convenience sampling
	3.2 Action	Accept all five positive responses
	3.3 Outcome	Five cases studies

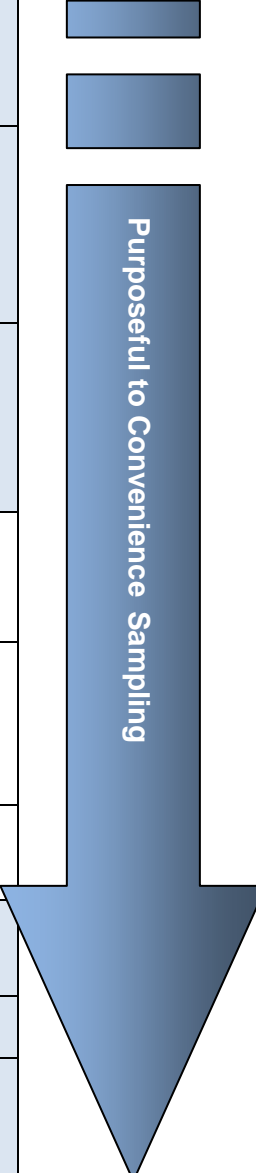


Table 5.6a Negotiating Access Process

Following the negotiating access decision process outlined above, I received three positive responses from the initial call for participation in Stage 1, two that were within the selection criteria outlined and one that had less than three years trading. With an insufficient number of positive responses within the criteria, it became clear that I would be unable to obtain a sample that was representative of women entrepreneurs from the North East in terms of sector location, age and ethnicity. I decided to open up the call for participants through an advert to a number of women only regional network e-newsletters. I received two positive responses from this advert, both were outside of the criteria of trading for more than three years. At this point I only had two women entrepreneurs within the original selection criteria specified. I decided that due to the difficulties negotiating access it was appropriate to relax the criteria and accept all five organisations that had expressed an interest moving from purposeful to convenience sampling.

Three out of the five case studies had been trading for less than three years: two for two years and the third was a new start-up that had only been trading for one week. My decision to include these three cases, particularly the business that had only been trading for one week, was upon reflection of my subjective paradigm and FSR approach.

The epistemological aim of this study was to understand the lived experiences of women entrepreneurs' and their followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership, allowing them to construct and reconstruct their subjective realities. Furthermore my FSR approach is concerned with providing space from which women are able to "contextualise [their] lives" (Nicolson, 1996: 23) placing emphasis upon their situated knowledge (Smith, 1987; Collins, 1990; Harding, 1991; Hartsock, 1997; McCorkel and Myers, 2003). Consequently, given the epistemic stance of my research the study should not be driven by obtaining participants of similar context but rather acknowledge their diverse positions. Mini biographies for each individual woman entrepreneur case study are provided in Chapter Six (see section 6.2.4) to convey the social location of the women's life history before their voices are re-presented through themes of experiences.

Furthermore, whilst the sample was not a cross representation of women entrepreneurs in the North East in terms of age, ethnicity, business trading duration and sector location, all of the women are educated to at least undergraduate degree level and are white, the ethnic group identified to have the lowest entrepreneurial activity within the UK (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2004) and for which the family is a site of oppression (Walby, 1989). A sample of all white women, however unintentionally, would therefore provide further understandings of white women's experiences of entrepreneurial leadership in the UK.

Each of the five women entrepreneurs were contacted via telephone to confirm their participation and emailed the consent forms (organisational, entrepreneur leader and employee). I also attached a draft email I had written for the employees of the organisation. I offered to meet/visit each of the women entrepreneur leaders at their place of work to develop the relationship, three out of the five agreed to this the other two felt this was unnecessary and declined my offer, both of these women entrepreneur leaders operated within traditionally male dominated sectors.

In terms of negotiating access with the employees I felt that it would be most appropriate for the women entrepreneur leaders to initially discuss the research with them to ensure they felt comfortable to participate. Once the discussion had taken place, either the woman entrepreneur would send me an email with the contact details of the employee or the employee would email me directly.

As with all of the entrepreneurs I offered to meet with the employees to discuss the research process and any questions they had regarding the individual informed consent. Once I had obtained the organisational and individual consent forms from the women entrepreneur leaders and employees the research commenced. In two of the cases, negotiating access with employees was prolonged which resulted in their exclusion from the initial interview round. After much negotiation I made the decision to ask the women entrepreneur leaders in both cases to identify a peer with whom they have worked for a substantial period of time to participate in the follow up round of interviews. Both peers identified by their respective women entrepreneur leaders agreed to participate to provide an alternative perspective.

In negotiating access I guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality for all of my participants, therefore, I use pseudonyms when referring to the women entrepreneur leaders and to ensure I maintain their anonymity the only bio data I am able to outline is: the sector of their business, the duration their current business has been trading, the number of people they employ as I entered and exited the field and the number of previous or existing businesses (see Table 5.6b).

Pseudonym of woman entrepreneur leader	Sector	Duration existing business has been trading on entering field	No. of employees (entering - exiting field)	No. of previous or existing businesses
Helen	IT	2 years	8-10	2
Susan	Health and Beauty	1 week	5	2
Natalie	Construction	5 years	46-30	3
Beverley	Law	2 years	5	0
Sandra	Childcare	6 years	22	0

Table 5.6.b Outline of women entrepreneur leaders' case studies

Maintaining the anonymity for the employees and peers was more complex. The depth of analysis, evaluation and specificity of examples the three employees and two peers were prepared to share with me was not anticipated. Despite four of the five employees and peers consenting to share their raw data transcripts with their respective women entrepreneurs, I felt making specific links and associations between women entrepreneurs and employee/peers could potentially cause harm. However, I felt it was also unethical to discard and exclude employee and peers voices given the data had been collected as I would be making an authorial choice to silence their voices.

Consequently, the decision was taken to present employee and peer voices as followers' voice which did not differentiate between employee or peer. To ensure anonymity, no bio data or specific examples that could reveal followers' identities or link them to a specific woman entrepreneur leader, were included within the presentation of findings. Also, to further maintain their anonymity and not specify their sex, followers are referred by number rather than using a pseudonym: Follower 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. As a consequence of one of the followers no longer being contactable between the first and second stage of interviewing another individual with a relationship with the respective woman entrepreneur leader replaced that person; therefore, six followers participated in the study.

With an understanding of the access issues provided above, the following section moves to discuss the process of data collection and the multiple methods implemented.

5.7 Data Collection Methods

This section discusses the methods of data collection chosen to explore women's experiences and their followers' perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership. Given the subjectivist and FSR approach taken within this study, research methods that provided individuals with the space to reflect and articulate their "concrete experiences" (Collins, 1990: 209) were paramount. Qualitative research methods were therefore selected as they enabled a deeper comprehension of participants' realities, without oversimplifying the context, of their lived experiences (Saunders *et al.*, 2003) to address the overall research question: *Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?*

An overview of the data collection methods conducted in each case is outlined in Table 5.7 below. Semi structured interviews, taking a life history approach for women entrepreneurs in the initial interview round, were conducted, along with research diaries which supported the main interview data. Participant observation was also employed in one case. Cognisant that leadership is a social process (Hunt 2004) over time and not a sole event or action (Hunter *et al.*, 2007) the study was conducted over an 18 month period from February 2008 – September 2009. It comprised a two stage interview process, supplemented by participant research diaries which were conducted between the interview stages for a two month period. The sections that follow provide further detail of the selected methods and how they were conducted.

Case	Stage 1 Interview	Research Diaries (Dates distributed from - to)	Participant Observation	Stage 2 Interviews	Follower Stage 1 Interview	Follower Stage 2 Interviews	Follower Research Diaries (Dates distributed from - to)
Helen	07/03/08	17/06/08-04/09/08	04/08/08-05/08/08	25/11/08	28/02/08	24/02/09	17/06/08-04/09/08
Susan	17/03/08	14/06/08-05/09/08	Not conducted	10/12/08	15/05/08	20/01/09	14/06/08-05/09/08
Natalie	10/04/08	13/06/08-12/09/08	Not conducted	09/09/09	15/05/08*	23/09/09*	*
Sandra	16/07/08	16/07/08-05/09/08	Not conducted	05/05/09	**	20/05/09	**
Beverley	16/06/08	16/06/08-18/09/08	Not conducted	21/05/09	**	30/06/09	**

**Data collection stage incomplete due to difficulties negotiating follower access*

*** Different followers participated at the follower stage one and stage two interview phase therefore the research diary phase was incomplete*

Table 5.7 Overview of research methods by case study

5.7.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The purpose of interviewing “is to understand themes of the everyday” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009: 24). For this thesis, the importance was to understand everyday themes of gender practice (Martin, 2003, 2006) within the process of entrepreneurial leadership. Adopting a semi-structured approach to interviewing enabled participants to voice their subjective understandings of their lived experiences (Hesse-Biber, 2007; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). Furthermore, taking an in-depth approach to interviewing enabled the hidden experiences of marginalised groups to be surfaced, a key concern for feminist researchers (Hesse-Biber, 2007). The format of semi-structured interviews provided a structure that allowed issues to be explored in-depth without being constraining. Whilst I had an interview guide for each of the interview stages (See Appendix 1, 2, 3, and 4) I also had the flexibility to interject and ask further questions to clarify or delve deeper with new questions as issues emerged during the interview.

Despite qualitative techniques being popular within many feminist studies (Griffin, 1995), interviewing is an inherently masculine paradigm (Oakley, 1981). Masculinities are drawn upon to construct *the* effective interview, positioning femininities within the interview context such as emotion and empathy as ineffective and unprofessional interview conduct. I therefore differentiate and shift my interview style out of the masculine paradigm into a feminist place by “asking questions and exploring issues that are of particular concern in women’s lives” (Hesse-Biber, 2007:113), focusing on the development of the research relationship and engaging in reflexivity. I therefore made a personal investment in the research relationships by showing emotions, empathy, sensitivity and when compelled to do so shared my own experiences (Oakley, 1993).

The first stage interviews for the women participants took a life or oral history approach to understand the women’s situated knowledge (Naples, 2007). Life or oral histories is a technique which is positioned between ethnography, sociology and history with the overall objective to gain knowledge about life experience through story telling (Leavy, 2007). The technique enables the researcher to access “personal experience of oppression” allowing women’s voices to be heard (Leavy, 2007: 154). Leavy (2007:155) highlights the alignment between feminism and life or oral histories as “bridging the personal biography of women with the social context in which the biography is written” to highlight masculine hegemony and gendered assumptions. Furthermore, not only did the life and oral histories technique align with my FSR, it is also positioned as a key source within the concept of authentic leadership which followers draw upon to interpret their leaders’ authenticity (Gardner *et al.*, 2005, Shamir and Eilam, 2005, Sparrowe, 2005).

The open ended structure of the technique, combined with non directive questioning, allowed the research participants the freedom to express their realities and introduce concepts that were of critical importance to them without feeling constrained (Musson, 2004). I began the women entrepreneur leaders' initial interview with the following open questions:

- Tell me how you got to here? What's your story? Start as far back as you like or feel comfortable with.
- How did you make the move to entrepreneurship? Why?

The aim was to give participants the space to share their own lived experiences (Hesse-Biber, 2007; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) allowing their experiences of gender within entrepreneurial leadership to emerge and introduce concepts important to them (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Giving women entrepreneur leaders space to voice their experiences allowed me to ask probing questions and explore issues and examples that were specific to their lives (Hesse-Biber, 2007), part of their situated knowledge (Naples, 2007). As part of the interview schedule I also prepared more specific questions to gauge their experiences and understandings of entrepreneurship and leadership within small business and gender should this not emerge through their life history or require further examples, for example (see Appendix 1 for further examples):

- What's been your biggest learning point as a leader of a small business?
- How do you think you are perceived differently as a woman entrepreneur leader?

Follow-up initial interviews did not take a life histories approach as authentic leadership places importance on leader life histories (Gardner *et al.*, 2005) rather than followers. Interviews began with two open questions:

- Tell me how you got to be in your current role? When? How?
- How did you feel when you first started to work here?

The open questions allowed issues relating to entrepreneurial leadership and gender to emerge that were followed up with probing questions and supported by more specific questions on the interview guide for example (see Appendix 2 for further examples):

- Tell me about your relationship with your leader? How does this make you think or feel?

- Have you ever made a mistake whilst working for your leader that you are prepared to tell me about? How did your leader react? How did this make you think or feel?

Throughout the interview I used prompts and reworded questions where participants were unsure of the meaning of words or indicated their discomfort with some of the language I used. For example one follower preferred for me to call the woman entrepreneur leader “boss”.

The initial interviews took place over a four month period between February and June 2008 with all five women entrepreneurs and three followers. Three initial interviews were conducted within the Business School but due to business practicalities and time constraints of the research participants the remainder of the interviews took place at the research participants’ place of work as the need to develop relationships took greater priority over providing optimal interview conditions. At the beginning of each interview participants were reminded of the purpose of the research, how and what the data would be used for, that they would have the opportunity to review the transcribed version of the interview and that their participation was voluntary.

Initial interviews with the women entrepreneurs lasted between one hour 40minutes and two hours 20 minutes. Interviews with the employees lasted between 40 minutes and one hour 40 minutes.

The first stage interview took a more general approach allowing participants to speak freely about their personal experiences in relation to entrepreneurial leadership allowing gender to emerge through their stories. Three of the women entrepreneurs found the initial interview extremely useful in terms of discussing their business as the interview created the time and space to reflect ‘on’ their business. They described usually being distracted by the day to day business processes which hindered them from actually working ‘on’ their business. They each said that their intention was to utilise the interview transcript once returned to them as a prompt for change and action.

The second stage interviews focused more upon the gendered aspects of their entrepreneurial leadership experiences. The interview for both women entrepreneur leaders and followers remained semi structured and opened with broad questions (e.g. what does being a woman in business mean to you? What does having a woman boss mean to you?).

Each question was open ended to encourage participants to describe their experiences in their own words, but each question also had a number of probing questions specifically designed to understand their experiences in relation to entrepreneurial leadership and gender. An interview guide for both women entrepreneur leaders and followers are provided within the appendix (see Appendix 3 and 4)

The data was analysed as the research progressed, therefore, I was able to identify when the data had reached the point of theoretical saturation, “the point in category development at which no new properties, dimensions or relationships emerge during analysis” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 143). Guest *et al.* (2006) assert in their study of data saturation and variability that theoretical saturation can occur within twelve interviews with basic themes developing within six. Therefore, eighteen interviews enabled me to understand in-depth the key issues within and across my cases (Akerlind, 2008), generating 243,190 words of data (see Table 5.7.1 for a breakdown of data). As a consequence of two followers not participating in the initial interviewing stage and one follower being replaced by another between the first and second interview stage, an individual breakdown of data by follower would contravene my ethical commitment to anonymity, therefore I have provided the collective amount of follower data at each stage.

Participant Data	Initial Interview Data (no. of words)	Follow up Interview Data (no. of words)
Helen	13,806	8,570
Susan	21,322	10,501
Natalie	19,250	14,390
Beverley	26,944	15,263
Sandra	26,791	21,389
Followers	26,352	38,612
Words per interview stage	134,465	108,725
Total words	243,190	

Table 5.7.1 Interview Data Breakdown

All of the interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. I made a conscious decision not to make supplementary notes and to give the participants my full attention as a way of building the research relationship. Leavy (2007: 158) highlights the importance of feminist researchers to be active listeners to “control the flow of conversation and to listen with completion and devotion”. I transcribed the first four interviews to enable closeness with the data to begin analysis before the remaining interviews were transcribed by a professional.

5.7.2 Research Diaries

Between the initial interview and follow up interview, the five women entrepreneur leaders and two followers maintained a research diary for a two month period, from June to September 2008. Qualitative research diaries were selected due to their ability to capture rich subjective data (Symon, 2004), exploring processes, relationships and settings (Symon, 2004). They provide a record of the everyday routines and processes the subjective individual engages in (Symon, 2004; Elliott, 1997), within the process of entrepreneurial leadership and *doing* and *undoing* of gender (Deutsch, 2007). This aligns with the feminist aim of my research, to capture participants’ lived experiences (Brooks, 2007; Hesse- Biber, 2007; Pillow and Mayo, 2007).

Given the ontological and epistemological position of this study, an “open format response style allowing respondents to recount feelings about personally meaningful events” was adopted (Symon, 2004: 99). Each of the seven participants were given a hard copy notebook allowing them the flexibility to complete extracts whenever and wherever was most convenient for them and without having the restriction of a one page per day diary entry. My intention was to allow the subjective perceptions, relevant to individual participants, to emerge (Symon, 2004) within their diary reflections.

I explained the diary process to each participant at the end of the initial interview but also inserted an instruction letter at the beginning of the diary providing a guide for completion outlining that I would like the participants to reflect upon their experiences, reactions, thoughts, feelings and behaviours relating to their experiences of the entrepreneurial leadership process. Given the notebook format, I also requested that they write the date at the top of each entry in the note book. I suggested that the participants re-visited their diary at least on a weekly basis or note down significant thoughts or feelings that came to mind as events emerged. As Elliott (1997) highlights, qualitative research diaries are written discontinuously, therefore entries could be made daily or at longer intervals such as weekly.

The letter also clearly stated that I would call them after the first week of diary completion if they had any queries once the process started and that I would collect and return the diary after the first month to photocopy extracts to begin data analysis and ensure that my instructions and open format were providing the required data. The beginning and end dates of the diary completion were also clearly highlighted. I always collected and returned the diaries by hand to ensure confidentiality as I did not want to risk losing the diaries in the mail, also it gave me a legitimate reason to see my participants face to face and develop the research relationship further, paramount within feminist research (Gilligan, 1982). Furthermore, given the time and effort taken by each participant to complete the diaries, I spent some time talking to them to gauge their thoughts or discuss any issues that emerged through the study (Symon, 2004). From my discussions the women entrepreneur leaders found the process extremely useful and supportive in terms of creating space to think about what was going on in the business and think ahead. The followers, however, felt less comfortable with the process and highlighted as a consequence their entries were more descriptive than reflective. The diary data was therefore used to supplement the vast interview data, by interweaving diary data that supported or did not support the interview analysis as illustrative examples.

5.7.3 Participant Observation

To complement the interviews and research dairies, I felt overt participant observation would enable deeper understandings of the lived experiences (Brooks, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2007) of women entrepreneur and followers, to understand their situated knowledge (Naples, 2007) within the process of entrepreneurial leadership.

Covert observation was not something that my institution permitted but was neither something that I felt comfortable to conduct personally. I conducted participant observation in Helen's business over a two day period taking the role of observer-as-participant (Junkers, 1960). Due to the close proximity that small businesses operate, I felt it would have been inappropriate and uncomfortable for the research participants and other employees if I was to purely observe, particularly given that small businesses are generally under resourced and stretched. For me to simply observe may have been perceived by participants as a lack of personal investment by myself causing resentment and suspicion and result in a lack of co-operation (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002).

I also felt that it was essential for me to become integrated within the business as this enabled the development of confidence and trust between myself and the respondents (Waddington, 2004). Consequently, I asked Helen prior to the observation dates to allocate small jobs and tasks for me to do during my time there. Tasks included collating information, and obtaining feedback on their website and new brand. I felt this strategy worked well as this allowed me to speak to every member of the business on a non research matter so they felt more relaxed around me. However, a main disadvantage was that I was very busy at times or in a situation where I felt making notes would be to the detriment of the research relationships. At times I felt that I had a level of acceptance from the employees and I did not want to jeopardize this by making them feel uncomfortable and take copious notes in front of them that may distract them from their talk or action. I opted instead to jot down words or phrases that would remind me of the point that I would then write up more fully at either lunchtime or at home that evening. The data was used to further support identified themes with illustrative examples in the initial findings, see Chapter Six.

As I reflected upon participant observation conducted in Helen's business, the process was useful in terms of developing the research relationship. I felt I had developed a much closer relationship with Helen and her follower as a result of the observation in comparison to other cases. However, after the process I asked Helen what her thoughts and feelings were prior and during the participant observation process where she explained the pressure she felt to find tasks for me to do and ensuring I felt comfortable during my time within the business. I therefore evaluated the time spent in the field, the difficulty negotiating suitable dates and times which were convenient for the business workload against the data generated and how comfortable Helen felt prior and during the data collection I decided not to pursue any further observations. I had discussed the possibility of participant observation with the other women entrepreneurs who had initially agreed to allow participant observation and they too felt that in reality this would be too much of a time commitment and did not wish to participate in this stage of the research, therefore, I decided not to continue participant observation within this study.

The data gathered from the data collection process outlined was then analysed in two stages discussed in the next section.

5.8 Data Interpretation and Analysis

This section provides an outline of the data analysis approach taken within this research. My framework for analysis is outlined, describing the data handling process following data collection through to the interpretation and presentation of my findings before discourse analysis is discussed.

As Elliott (2005) asserts, data analysis must focus on the features or functions of the data that are central to this study. Cognisant of my feminist standpoint in this research, and the overall research question: '*Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?*' the concern of this study is to capture and understand how gender is experienced in entrepreneurial leadership contexts. The following research aims guide the basis for interpretation:

- Provide a gender perspective to the study of female entrepreneurship and their followers experiences of entrepreneurial leadership
- Contribute to emerging entrepreneurial leadership research considering gender, acknowledging follower involvement, individual agency , and recognising entrepreneurial leadership as a social process
- Contribute further empirical research from a gender perspective of women entrepreneurs to the authentic leadership theory base

Through a gender lens, the basis of interpretation focuses upon subjective understandings of entrepreneurial leadership in relation to women's experiences and follower perspectives. Research participants' talk may not be premeditated but the fact that they chose to construct one account over another elucidates how they construct their realities (Potter and Wetherall, 1995) and comprehend "how they have come to develop deeply entrenched habits of thought which unnecessarily circumscribed the possibilities for action" (Chia, 2000: 517) for women in the entrepreneurial leadership context.

5.8.1 Authorial Strategy

I will now discuss the process of data analysis which I refer to as my authorial strategy (see Table 5.8.1a), outlining how I have handled the data from collection to the presentation of my findings, detailing how I moved from the analysis of individual interviews to analyse across interviews and integrate the research diary analysis within the findings.

Stage	Process
Analysis of Individual Interviews	1 Each interview was transcribed and read individually
	2 Transcripts were sent back to participants to review, allowing them to amend, delete or make any additions
	3 Once returned a process of “rummaging” (McCracken, 1988:33) began where I then read and reread each individual transcript making marginal annotations to become close to and knowledgeable of the data (Carabine, 2001)
	4 Participants’ whole responses to each question were then transferred into a table format (see Table 5.7.1b) grouped under the interview questions. No authorial choices were made therefore a complete transfer of participants’ voices were made into the table
	5 Two further columns were then added to the table: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Included my own interpretations of the text 2. filter individual interviews into initial themes
	6 Process of “rummaging” (McCracken, 1988: 33) began with the research diaries to identify examples which supported or contradicted the initial themes identified within the interview. Illustrative examples included in the fifth column of the table (see Table 5.7.1b)
Analysis Across Participant Interviews	7 A process of comparison was then introduced across interview transcript themes, producing themes of women’s <i>experience</i> and followers’ <i>perspectives</i> presented in Chapter Six
	8 Broader themes identified in Chapter Six were analysed across elements of <i>variation</i> , <i>rhetoric</i> , <i>accountability</i> and <i>stake and interest</i> (Potter, 2004) which highlighted complexities and tensions, enabling ambivalence, ambiguity, contradiction and paradox to emerge (Hearn, 1998) in order to identify discourses which shape women’s experiences and followers perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership
	9 Discourses are synthesised with extant literature to identify where the discourses do and do not support the literature in Chapter Seven
	10 Relationships between discourses were identified to develop the original contribution to knowledge of this thesis

Table 5.8.1a My Authorial Strategy

Following each interview the entire voice recording was transcribed verbatim including my own responses, statements recognising my part in the interview process (Potter and Wetherall, 1987). I transcribed the first four interviews to get close to the data, with the remaining 14 interviews transcribed by a professional, all of which I listened to and checked back in ensure accuracy. The transcripts were not cleaned, all “repetitions, false starts and non lexical utterances such as ‘umms’ and ‘errs’” (Elliott, 2005: 52) and pauses were included to provide an understanding of the context and illustrate action.

However, the data was cleaned up in the final presentation of the thesis by “adding appropriate punctuation, removing pauses and false starts” (Elliott, 2005:52) to aid the interpretation of the content of participants’ extracts (Elliott, 2005).

Transcripts were emailed back to participants to review, offering further reflection allowing the opportunity to add, amend or delete any section. Once I had received the transcript version that the participant was comfortable with, I began a process of “rummaging” (McCracken, 1988: 33) where I read and reread the transcript making marginal annotations to increase my knowledge and closeness to the data (Carabine, 2001). No links to the literature were identified at this stage as my intention was to have, as far as possible, a fresh reading of the data. Like Grandy (2008), I used a table format to create a formal record of my data analysis (see Table 5.8.1b) with each interview analysed individually. I input the interview questions in the first table column and transferred the participant’s full responses to each question into the corresponding row in the column to the right of the research question. At this stage I made a conscious decision to be inclusive with the data and copied all of the participant’s response to each question into the table so that I was not making any authorial choices, therefore participants’ voices remained, a key concern of FSR (Brooks, 2007, Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007; Crasnow, 2008). Two further columns were then added to the table, the first to include my own interpretations of the text and the second to filter the individual interviews into initial themes (e.g. Family, Individualism, Trust, Values) which reflected the individual interviews. No relationships between themes within an interview transcript or across other interview transcripts were made at this stage.

I then moved to analyse the research diary data on an individual diary basis. I began a further “rummaging” process (McCracken, 1988: 33) reading and re-reading diary data to gain familiarity with the events and situations of participants’ accounts. Against the initial themes identified in the individual interview analysis stage, I looked for illustrative examples which supported or contradicted the themes. I inputted illustrative examples into the additional column in the data analysis table to aid the cross referencing for data analysis.

Answers were then reviewed across the women’s interview and diary data and then the followers interview and diary data (where available) separately to identify broader themes of women’s experiences and followers’ perspectives through a process of constant comparison. This aligns with the concern of FSR to make sense of the commonalities of women’s lives without denying the differences between and amongst women (Buzzanell, 2003; Stanley and Wise, 1993).

Instead more meaningful themes across women's voices and followers' voices were identified. I used colour coding across participant data analysis tables to aid the identification of broader themes. Initial themes were developed before broader themes were created that were more meaningful when reading across participant voices. As I reflected upon within the ethical section (see Section 5.10), given the sensitive nature of follower data I made the decision not to link women and follower voices together, therefore, broader themes are identified and discussed under sections of follower and women entrepreneur experiences of entrepreneurial leadership in Chapter Six. The next section moves to discuss discourse analysis which comprises stage eight to ten of the authorial strategy (see Table 5.8.1a).

Question	Participant Response	Research Diary examples	My Interpretation	Initial Theme
How do you persuade or negotiate your employees to follow you?	<p>"I mean you do that everyday. Everytime you open your mouth. Well at least I do that everyday. Um for me it's very important that people feel included, so it will be each individual per their specific role and then it will be whatever the team is so now we've a management team and a sales team so um I want them to be um not only members of but owners."</p>	<p>"I selected three staff who would be my first choice to develop into a management team. It was interesting to see the three staff react to being addressed as the 'management team'. I had to make a conscious effort not to respond to all queries and wait to hear their replies"</p>	<p>Helen's response to this question indicates that persuasion and negotiation is an integral part of what she does on a daily basis to ensure that her employees feel involved and included within her business. Helen's strategy to ensure employees feel involved is to delegate responsibilities to them, empowering them to take ownership. There is evidence of her fostering such involvement in her diary comment that she consciously holds back to allow her employees to come forward with their responses to queries in meetings. She almost self regulates her behaviour to ensure she remains true to her promise of involving and valuing her employees ideas and opinions. Perhaps Helen also recognises that whilst this strategy personally develops individuals it is also necessary for the long term success of her business as she needs to know that she has commitment from her employees to be successful [feminine/communal behaviour for masculine/agentive ends].</p>	<p>Inclusion/ involvement</p> <p>Empowerment</p> <p>Autonomy</p>

Table 5.8.1b Participant Data Analysis Table

5.8.2 Discourse Analysis

Given the concern of this thesis is how discourses shape our thinking, attitudes and behaviour supporting understandings of what modes of behaviour are deemed to be acceptable (Simpson and Lewis, 2007; Gannon and Davies, 2007) data will be analysed through social practices and structures.

As Potter (2004: 616) argues “there is no single recipe for doing discourse analysis” as each study has different requirements, however, there are a number of “ingredients which, when combined together, are likely to produce something satisfying”. Potter (2004) suggests that whilst these ‘ingredients’ are not an exhaustive list, the majority of discourse analysts will focus on some of the following: variation, detail, rhetoric, accountability, stake and interest, and building on prior studies. The below table (see Table 5.8.2) outlines four of the six ingredients that this study will draw upon; variation, rhetoric, accountability and stake and interest and how each element is appropriate for this research.

Elements	Understanding offered by Potter (2004)	Appropriateness to this study
Variation	Look for difference, shifts, choices of different words in and between participants voices	A useful ingredient to analyse across participants voices which will focus on differences in relation to moments of doing, undoing and simultaneously (un)doing gender
Rhetoric	The way discourse is organised to make an argumentative case and the way it is designed to simultaneously undermine it in relation to available competing alternatives	Explore how the doing of gender helps undo gender (Kelan, 2010) through simultaneous and multiple enactments of masculinities and femininities (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) enabling women entrepreneurs to reconstruct relations – an attempt through their individual agency to disrupt the gender binary
Accountability	A concern with displaying one’s activities as rational, sensible and justifiable	How participants reflect upon their individual agency (acts, choices, struggles, influence, acceptance and reject) in relation to their intentionality (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010) to satisfy social role and/or entrepreneurial leadership expectations
Stake and Interest	People attend to their own and other’s interests, displaying the basis on which they are talking or constructing	How participants attend to gender social role expectations and/or entrepreneurial leadership expectations through their talk

Table 5.8.2 Discourse Ingredients Adapted from Potter, J. (2004) ‘Discourse Analysis’. In M. Hardy and A. Bryman (Eds.) Handbook of Data Analysis. London: SAGE.

Potter (2004) highlights that the above ingredients should not be viewed as rules as they cannot then be easily codified and will vary in importance; therefore he suggests they be regarded as “elements in an analytical mentality needed for research of this kind” (Potter, 2004: 617).

For this thesis discourse analysis will combine variation, rhetoric, accountability and stake and interest. Although I included hesitations and lexical choices within the interview transcripts the purpose was to provide an understanding of context within my analysis rather than attempting to closely read how and why participants spoke in certain ways, a priority of conversational analysts (Potter, 2004), therefore the *detail* element was rejected.

In stage eight of my authorial strategy I began to look for *variation* in and between the broader themes identified, exploring in relation to repetitions, differences, (in)consistencies and importantly for what was not said (Sunderland, 2004). As I worked across themes through the *rhetoric* (competing themes), *accountability* (how participants explain their behaviour or decisions) and *stake and interest* (how they attend to their own and others' interests) elements, which Potter (2004) suggests are inextricably linked, complexities and tensions of women's experiences and followers' perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership emerged, highlighting ambivalence, ambiguity, contradiction and paradox (Hearn, 1998) across the themes. Baxter (2003) asserts that discourse analysis assists in identifying gaps, ambiguities, tensions, contradictions and power shifts within and between different accounts. In drawing attention to the complexities and tensions, some discourses which shaped both women's experiences and follower perspectives were identified and synthesised with extant literature to identify areas that support and contradict current understandings (stage nine of my authorial strategy), before relationships between discourses were identified to outline the original contribution to knowledge of this study (stage ten of my authorial strategy) presented within Chapter Seven.

Taking such an intertextual approach supports the FSR approach taken as it enables greater understandings of women's situated knowledge (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007; Naples, 2007) and how their texts weave within and through other texts as part of a larger network of texts. Kenoy and Oswick, (2004) describe such intertextual engagement as a 'textscape'. They assert that text and talk never exist in isolation but are also part of a larger landscape or 'textscape'. Focusing on discourse analysis enables the study of talk and text in social settings (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). For this study exploring *how* women entrepreneurs and their followers use language in specific contexts further supports understandings of gender within the entrepreneurial leadership process.

5.9 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an integral part of feminist studies to establish trustworthiness as it encourages researchers to question their 'social location' (Johnson and Duberley, 2003) and positionality (McCorkel and Myers, 2003; Hesse Biber, 2007). As a feminist researcher, I must subject myself to the "same level of scrutiny" that I direct to my research participants (McCorkel and Myers, 2003: 203). Consequently, I must make my 'backstage' assumptions, motivations, narratives and relations transparent (McCorkel and Myers, 2003). I could not objectively separate myself from my research, as the "cultural baggage" I bring to the research (Limerick and O'Leary, 2006:100) has shaped the methodological design and choices. Reflexivity is therefore outlined as an intricate part of the feminist research process, to understand my own situated knowledge (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007; Naples, 2007)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest researchers maintain a reflexive journal to record thoughts and feelings relating to personal and research experiences. I maintained a journal, in both an electronic and paper form, to record my research experiences ranging from the angst of finding comfort with my feminist position, gaining access, developing and maintaining research relationships, methodological issues and feedback I received from peers and established researchers when presenting or discussing my study. The diary developed my self-awareness as an early woman academic researcher and co-constructor of meaning to explore how my underlying assumptions have created barriers and shaped my past, current and future landscapes (Clandinin, 2008). My engagement in this reflexive process facilitated the identification and self disclosure of myself.

Documenting and engaging in such self reflexivity supported the credibility of my findings in relation to my FSR as it enabled me to revisit my initial thoughts and feelings relating to my experiences and analytical interpretations. Hartsock (1997) asserts that we must remain mindful of categories that come into our thoughts first, as they are generally those of the dominant group. As I engaged in reflexivity and my understanding of feminism and gender matured and developed through the research process, I was able to identify the gendered traces within my initial interpretations which lacked a feminist perspective until I actively engaged with the reflexive process. Martin (2006) asserts that reflexivity is imperative from a gender perspective as remaining non-reflexive is harmful for women in terms of exclusion, exhaustion and being cast as different, as individuals are not aware of the gender in their action (see Chapter 2 Section 2.2.3 for further discussion).

Reflexivity also supports feminism's ethical considerations of relationship, care and representations (Pillow and Mayo, 2007) discussed in the following section (see Section 5.10). It facilitates the existence of the diverse 'voices' within the research (Limerick and O'Leary, 2006) mediating the researcher – researched power differentials as the researcher as the knower and the researched as objects.

My reflexive practice is outlined in full in the final chapter as I reflect upon the above issues in greater detail, exploring how gender, my emotions, values, motives and goals have shaped the planning, collection, interpretation and presentation of the research.

5.10 Feminist Ethical Considerations

To ensure complete transparency and ultimately safety for the research participants, extensive consideration was given to the ethical implications of the study with organisational and individual consent forms developed outlining the research requirements (See Appendices 5, 6 and 7). Formal ethical approval was sought and granted from Newcastle Business School's Ethics Committee in December 2007. However, feminist research demands in-depth consideration of the "ethical practices and responsibilities both in collecting data and in reporting the results" (Buch and Staller, 2007: 217) beyond the consideration of institutional ethics boards and committees i.e. access, friendships, protecting privacy and the politics of reporting (Buch and Staller, 2007).

Power and positionality is central to all feminist research to ensure other women are not exploited on the grounds of e.g. race, class, education, sexuality or disability (Buch and Staller, 2007). Remaining reflexively vigilant of my own positionality (outlined above, see Section 5.9) is important alongside considerations of the research relationship, care, and how I chose to represent women participants in the retellings of their stories are underlying principles of feminist ethics.

The development and maintenance of research relationships is an essential element of my feminist research (Gilligan, 1982) particularly given the time commitment required from participants and that the time period between initial contact and completion of the thesis was over two years. Whilst the research time commitment has not been intensive over the entire two year period, it has been demanding upon small business with limited resources at specific points in time. In order to develop the research relationship with participants, all of whom were unknown to me at the beginning of the research process, I made a personal investment (Oakley, 1993) sharing my personal views and experiences when asked or where I felt appropriate.

To remain detached and distant in order to achieve some level of 'objectivity' when asking the women to share their personal life histories would be unfair, uncaring and contravene my feminist values. Furthermore, attempting to be 'objective' would position me, as the researcher, in a position of power and my participants as powerless (Oakley, 1981). Whilst conventional theory does not favour this lack of 'objectivity' (Oakley, 1993) I believe that not to make a personal investment as the researcher would be detrimental to the study in relation to research participants feeling suspicious or resentful that they have openly shared their experiences whilst you resisted to share yours.

I also made compromises in the data collection process for the maintenance and development of the research relationship. For example one of the woman entrepreneurs requested that her interview was conducted at her place of work because she wanted to show me the new premises she had acquired. Although I knew that this would not be the most appropriate location to conduct the interview for several reasons (interruptions from staff, the meeting rooms were glass fronted and she could easily be distracted) I felt it would be potentially damaging to the research relationship for me to decline this offer and encourage her to visit the Business School instead (see Table 5.10 for further examples of research actions).

As a feminist researcher I also considered the ethics of care to my research participants and their communities. During the data collection process I was presented with some ethical dilemmas in relation to the intimate and delicate nature of some stories participants shared (Fonow and Cook, 1991). Gilligan (1982) offers a three stage decision making process to help feminist researchers manage ethical dilemmas, which I drew upon to aid my own decision making process: 1) I must reflect upon my own research self interests and what will be beneficial for my research; 2) the need to focus on what is caring for my research participants and their wider communities before entering; 3) to make a decision as to the most caring choice for everyone involved. An example of this was my decision not to link followers to their respective women entrepreneurs within the findings.

As a feminist researcher I have a 'double responsibility' to ensure participants' stories are retold so that no 'harm' is caused to participants and the wider female community whose lives the research intends to improve (Wolf, 1992). The aim is therefore to ensure that the retellings do not label women entrepreneurs in ways that could prove damaging to individuals and community members (Fine, 1994). Furthermore, I must be mindful of how participants may think or feel when they read or hear about how they are described or represented in publications, presentations or reports (Preissle, 2007). Mindful of the ethical considerations discussed above, Table 5.10 outlines the ethical actions and decisions I have taken.

Ethical consideration	Research Actions
<i>Research relationship: development and maintenance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time requirements of each research method for both women entrepreneurs and their employees were clearly stated in the initial contact email • In the initial email it also stated a date that I would follow up the email with a telephone call to clarify any issues but most importantly signal that I was reliable and trustworthy • I offered to visit each of the entrepreneurs at their place of work to discuss the research process and answer any questions they had regarding the Organisational Consent Form and Informed Consent Forms before they formally agreed to participate in the research • Invested my personal views and experiences • Thanked participants for their time after each interview and every time they returned a transcript • Maintained email contact with participants between interviews to update them on my research timeline and also if I had come across any workshops, training or awards that I thought they might be interested in which also ensured that 'I hadn't forgotten about them' • Compromise my research setting ideal e.g. conducting interviews on their premises
<i>Care</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I deal with participants' responses that could be harmful to women • Anonymity guaranteed to all research participants and organisations • Confidentiality guaranteed • Confidentiality was provided in respect of the raw data being stored securely with only researcher and supervision team able to access complete transcripts. Only extracts are used in this thesis and publications
<i>Retelling of participant stories</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim to ensure participants' voices were recorded in their own words • Transcripts were returned to the research participants to allow them the opportunity to review, enabling them to edit their responses before forwarding back to me to begin analysis • My interpretations of the data were passed back to participants for resonance and to ensure that their voice was not lost

Table 5.10 Ethical Research Actions

5.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter began by introducing subjectivism and feminism which has shaped this study, highlighting my personal values of disrupting masculine superiority (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) and placing women's lived experiences at the heart of the research (Brooks, 2007). Critiques of FSR are explored to locate my feminist position and describe its influence upon my methodological choices. The understanding of discourse and case study strategy were outlined, before issues of access were discussed. Multiple data collection techniques were outlined before my approach to data interpretation was discussed. Discourse analysis was outlined, along with my authorial strategy and analytical framework. The centrality of reflexivity is explained before the ethical considerations of feminist research are highlighted within the context of this study.

In the two chapters that follow, the findings from the study will be presented. Chapter Six will present themes in relation to my Authorial Strategy presented in Section 5.6.1, with Chapter Seven highlighting the discourses shaping entrepreneurial leadership.

Chapter Six

Women Entrepreneurs' and Followers' Experiences of Entrepreneurial Leadership through a Gender Lens

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the interpretations of data collected across five case studies of individual women entrepreneurs and their associated followers. The voices of both the women entrepreneurs and their follower are presented to highlight common themes which emerged from the process of analysis and interpretation. The themes demonstrate experiences of entrepreneurial leadership in small firms through a gender lens to support answering the overall research question which guides this thesis '*Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?*'

The analysis of the data and resulting interpretative themes contribute to the fourth research objective '*to offer in-depth interpretations of women entrepreneur's experiences and followers perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership in small businesses through a gender lens*'. The chapter then moves to address the fifth research objective to '*identify insights from the empirical study of women entrepreneurs' experiences and followers' perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership which contribute to understandings of entrepreneurial leadership, entrepreneurship and authentic leadership from a gender perspective*'.

The chapter is structured in three parts; firstly providing an outline of how the data has been (re)interpreted and (re)presented, secondly themes which emerged from followers' experiences and finally presenting themes that emerged from women entrepreneurs' experiences.

6.2 Approach to (Re)Interpreting and (Re)Presenting Themes of Experience

This section outlines how the data has been (re)interpreted and (re)presented to offer themes of experience for both women entrepreneurs and their followers. My authorial strategy is firstly discussed to provide an understanding of how the themes were developed, before re-orientating the reader to the analytical framework of this study. A brief outline of how the findings will be presented is considered before an outline of the women entrepreneurs' biographies are offered to provide an understanding of the women's social location (Naples, 2007) in line with the FSR approach taken in this thesis.

6.2.1 Authorial Strategy: Developing Themes

Drawing upon my Authorial Strategy outlined in Chapter Five (see section 5.7.1), which details the process of data handling from the original data collection to the presentation of findings, this chapter presents findings up to stage seven offering themes of women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences.

This section describes how themes of experience were developed from data collection to the presentation of findings in this chapter. Following each interview the data was fully transcribed before being sent back to the research participants to review, allowing them the opportunity to amend, delete or make any additional comments. Once the transcripts were returned a process of "rummaging" began (McCracken, 1988: 33) as I read and re-read the transcripts using the analytical framework. Participants' whole responses to each question were then transferred into a table format, grouped under the interview questions, with two further columns added to include my own interpretation of text and enable the filtering of individual interview responses into themes. The process of "rummaging" (McCracken, 1988: 33) was then repeated for the research diaries, identifying examples which supported or contradicted the themes emerging from the interview data. A process of comparison was introduced across interview transcript themes producing themes of women entrepreneurs' experiences and followers' experiences presented in this chapter.

In order for the reader to understand how I 'rummaged' through the data (McCracken, 1988) to identify themes of experience for both women entrepreneurs and followers I will re-orientate the reader with my analytical framework.

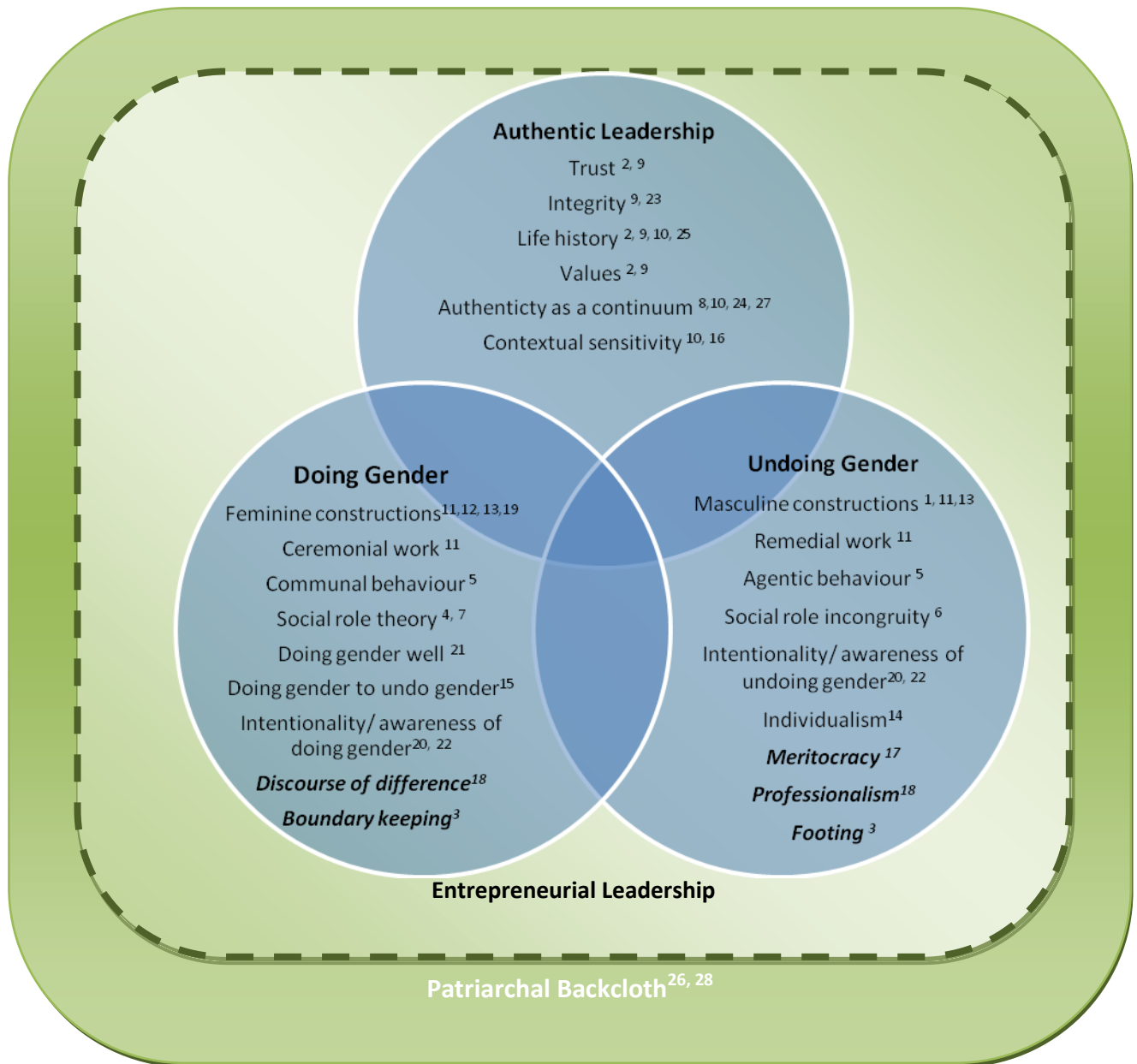
6.2.2 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of this thesis emerged from the literature review of the gender, women in leadership, female entrepreneurship and authentic leadership theory bases (see Figure 6.2.2) across Chapters Two, Three and Four. The intersection of gender, women in leadership, female entrepreneurship and authentic leadership research through a gender lens provides the focus of this study to conceptualise and empirically explore the research question which guides this thesis *'leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?'*

Patriarchy is understood to provide a backcloth to the analytical framework, framing understandings of entrepreneurship, leadership and entrepreneurial leadership as gendered in this thesis. A framework of doing and undoing gender is appropriate to explore experiences of gender in entrepreneurial leadership in small firms as it acknowledges individual agency whilst also acknowledging individuals' subjectivities in the interpretation of gender behaviour through socially perceived sex categories (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Doing gender in this thesis is understood to be how individuals *conform* to social expectations of appropriate behaviour for their socially perceived sex category, whilst undoing gender is understood to be how individuals *contradict* social expectations of appropriate behaviour for their socially perceived sex category.

Exploring experiences of gender in entrepreneurial leadership through a framework of authentic leadership is also suitable, given the concepts acknowledgement and involvement of followers within the process providing the opportunity to explore followers' agency and subjectivities. Exploring experiences of entrepreneurial leadership through authentic leadership is useful from a gender perspective as it provides space from which to reflect upon women's agency providing greater understandings of *how* women go against the main discursive practices of masculinity (Lewis, 2009), resulting in them being labelled as ineffectual (Mavin, 2009a). Furthermore, it enables exploration of *how* women sustain and reject masculinity, resulting in them being perceived negatively within the process of entrepreneurial leadership.

The analytical framework developed from the literature reviews across Chapters Two, Three and Four is outlined below (see Figure 6.2.2) to remind the reader of the examples I looked for as I rummaged through the data (Carabine, 2001).



Alvesson and Due Billing (1997)¹; Avolio *et al.*, (2004)²; Bruni *et al.*, (2004a)³; Eagly, (1987)⁴; Eagly and Carli (2007)⁵; Eagly and Karau (2002)⁶; Eagly *et al.*, (2000)⁷; Erickson (1995)⁸; Gardner *et al.*, (2005)⁹; George *et al.*, (2007)¹⁰; Gherardi (1994)¹¹; Grant (1988)¹²; Hines, (1992)¹³; Kelan (2008¹⁴, 2010¹⁵); Levitt and Hiestand (2004)¹⁶; Lewis (2006¹⁷, 2009¹⁸); Marshall (1993)¹⁹; Martin (2006)²⁰; Mavin and Grandy (2010)²¹; Nencel (2010)²²; Palanski and Yammarino (2009)²³; Roberts *et al.*, (2009)²⁴; Shamir and Eilam (2005)²⁵; Simpson and Lewis (2005)²⁶; Tracy and Trethewey (2005)²⁷; Walby (1989)²⁸

Figure 6.2.2 Analytical Framework

The purpose of the analytical framework is not to test whether authentic leadership, doing and undoing gender were occurring but to explore how they were experienced within an entrepreneurial leadership context against a backdrop of patriarchy. Given the patriarchal backdrop and FSR approach in this thesis, gender is the focus of this study and, therefore, other findings analysed through a different lens (i.e. race, sexual orientation, disability etc) may offer alternative findings which could also progress understandings of entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership. The next section outlines how the findings have been presented.

6.2.3 Presentation

Given the ethical considerations outlined in Chapter Five (see sections 5.9), to ensure follower anonymity, no bio data, specific examples, or reference to the stage of data collection is given. To avoid developing followers' identities, all followers are referred to by number rather than using a pseudonym: Follower 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Furthermore, the female pronoun will be used when referring to followers; however, it is important to note that this does not denote the sex of all followers as both women and men followers participated within the study.

Pseudonyms are used for the women entrepreneurs to enable the reader to maintain connections between the women's experiences and their bio data as providing an understanding of their social location is imperative within FSR (McCorkel and Myers, 2003). Given all of the women participated in the interviews and completed the research diaries, the research diary data is differentiated from interview data with the extract being underlined.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, whilst hesitations, utterances, pauses and repetitions were included within the transcription process to aid contextual understanding during the data analysis process, the data was 'cleaned up' (Elliott, 2005) to ease the reading of data extracts in the presentation of this thesis. The symbol ... denotes a significant pause in a participant's response and [...] denotes missing text. The decision to delete text from some of the selected extracts was made on ethical grounds to maintain anonymity and in some cases ensure no harm due to the sensitive nature of the data. Data is presented by separating and indenting the text from the main body discussion.

In the section that follows an outline biography is provided for each of the women entrepreneurs to enable the reader to construct an identity for them.

6.2.4 Women Entrepreneur's Biographies

Given the FSR approach taken in this thesis, providing an understanding of the women entrepreneurs' situated knowledge (Naples, 2007) is important in understanding their personal and diverse social locations to alleviate any essentialist claims. Consequently, mini-biographies are provided for each of the women entrepreneur case studies to share elements of the women's life histories to enable the reader to understand their standpoints as the chapter moves to firstly present follower themes before then re-presenting the women entrepreneurs' voices.

Helen is the founder and leader of an IT business which has been trading for two years at the point of initial contact, employing between eight and ten people. Helen is educated to degree level and starting her working life as a primary school teacher in the UK before moving to Canada and then Saudi Arabia with her husband where she began to work in IT. Her return to the UK saw her working for an IT company for a short time before she set up a business partnership with a colleague. Helen separated from her business partner and set up a small IT business which grew rapidly and she subsequently left to move back to her native North East. On discovering the business she had set up had gone into liquidation, Helen bought the rights to the original products and set up another company in the North East. Helen is married with three sons, none of whom are dependent. One son works within the business full-time and her other two sons help out on an ad hoc basis.

Susan is the founder and leader of a health and beauty business which commenced trading in February 2008, employing five people. Whilst running her business, Susan also works as a nurse during evenings on twilight shifts and is currently studying for an MSc through distance learning to fit around her business. Susan has two other businesses one of which she set up with a business partner but had not employed anyone until her current business. Susan is divorced and has one son who works in the business.

Natalie is the founder and leader of a construction business which has been trading for five years and employed 46 people at the point of initial contact. Due to the UK recession, which began at the end of 2008, Natalie's number of employees reduced to 30 at the point of the final interview. After completing a business undergraduate degree, Natalie gained experience in a larger business before deciding to set up the same business herself. Natalie currently has three businesses within the construction sector and operates the business as a group, employing both her father and previously her sister. Natalie was divorced when I initially made contact with no children, but during the data collection process Natalie remarried and was pregnant.

Beverley is the founder and leader of a law firm, employing five people and had been trading for two years at the point of contact. Beverley worked as a solicitor in London and the North East before becoming a partner. Beverley left her partner role to set up her own business. Beverley is married and has one dependent son.

Sandra is a founding member and leader of a childcare social enterprise which has been trading for six years, employing 22 people at the point of initial contact. Sandra had worked within childcare for over 30 years, chairs boards of two other social enterprises and has also set up another social enterprise. Sandra was completing an undergraduate degree during the data collection process. She is married and has two non-dependent sons.

The next section discusses the themes which emerged from the analysis across follower voices before moving to the women entrepreneurs themes of experience.

6.3 Follower Themes of Experience

The importance of follower involvement within this study is crucial given the understanding of gender, entrepreneurship, leadership and entrepreneurial leadership as processes. Processes are understood to be actions, interactions and relationships which "chart ongoing struggles and contestations intrinsic" to organizing (Chia, 1995). They are complex and reciprocal in nature with "emergent qualities which cannot be reduced to the independent contributions either of people or contexts" (Hosking and Morley, 1991: 63).

Furthermore, given the entrepreneurship field's entrepreneur centric approach (Simpson and Lewis, 2005), incorporating followers within the study offers a potential contribution to the theory base.

6.3.1 Entrepreneurship and Leadership - the Same and Different

The emerging field of entrepreneurial leadership highlights how scholars have treated entrepreneurship as a separate field of study from leadership (Vecchio, 2003; Cogliser and Brigham, 2004; Jensen and Luthans) based upon the premise that entrepreneurs are distinctly different to individuals in employment. This theme emerges from exploring *followers* perspectives of both entrepreneurship and leadership and whether they perceive them to be distinctly different or overlap in their understandings.

Followers were asked to describe what they understood as successful entrepreneurship and successful leadership via separate questions in the interviews. Given the patriarchal backcloth of this thesis, this question focuses upon the language drawn upon to describe successful entrepreneurship and leadership to explore whether masculine constructions of leadership and entrepreneurship in extant literature permeated into followers understandings and their consequent expectations of a successful leader and entrepreneur. Followers provided separate responses to both questions, therefore, their answers to leadership and entrepreneurship were not exactly the same, but there were some similarity in the language they drew upon to describe the separate processes.

Follower 4's response to the successful entrepreneurship question:

A successful entrepreneur is one who leads, inspires, who has a formidable team around them who are as good as them. Who recognise the complementariness of those individuals that are around them...who are quite visionary, but have the ability to actually follow through. And that's my experience with entrepreneurs, is that they're brilliant at the ideas but the follow-through is not quite the same. So for me a really successful entrepreneur is the one who can not only take an idea but can nurture it and has the ability to know when it's time to move on from it.

In parallel with the entrepreneurship research base, which Simpson and Lewis (2005) argue is entrepreneur centric rather than understood as a process, Follower 4 also individualises the process of entrepreneurship to a person. However, her description then moves to acknowledge others within the process identified through the need to lead and inspire a team, developing her response from an individualistic understanding to a processual understanding.

Acknowledging others within a process, highlights the importance of other people's gendered interpretations, highlighted as imperative within the women in leadership theory base (Mavin, 2009a, b), and also important within the context of this study as the research question that guides this thesis incorporates followers' perspectives. However, whilst Follower 4 acknowledges others' presence within the process, her description does not allow for follower agency and is, therefore, not a reciprocal relationship (Hosking and Morley, 1991). Follower 4's understanding positions followers as 'done to' and passive within the process. She places emphasis upon the individual entrepreneur to "recognise the complementariness" in those around them, have vision and "follow through" their ideas. Follower 4 identifies the "follow-through" as the criteria for success which cannot be achieved without a team around them.

Follower 4's understanding of entrepreneurship links to Gupta *et al's.*, (2004) construction of entrepreneurial leadership. Her emphasis upon ideas aligns with Gupta *et al's.*, (2004) first challenge of scenario enactment, as the ideas that the entrepreneur envisages, has the potential to create visionary scenarios for change. This construction of entrepreneurship as 'visionary' is a masculine description (Ahl, 2006) highlighting the need for women to undo gender to be socially perceived as successful within entrepreneurship whilst contradicting their social expectations of appropriate gender behaviour performed through their socially perceived woman's body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

However, Follower 4 emphasises that whilst ideas maybe positive, it is the "follow - through" in relation to "nurturing" and "the ability to know when it's time to move on" which is the key to success from her perspective to create as Gupta *et al.*, (2004) refers to it as the appropriate scenario to foster change. Gupta *et al's.*, (2004) second challenge, cast enactment, relates to how entrepreneurs draw upon the skills of the people around them to fulfil organisational goals similar to Follower 4's emphasis on the entrepreneur to "recognise the complementariness of those individuals that are around them".

Her recognition of the importance of others within a process, acknowledging their individual agency in relation to their ability to act and make decisions to work towards organisational goals, alongside the feminine description of “nurturing” highlights Follower 4’s construction of simultaneous enactments of masculinity and femininity within entrepreneurship (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Whilst Follower 4’s response to successful entrepreneurship draws upon leadership descriptions, when asked to describe successful leadership she also draws upon entrepreneurship as a comparator:

A leader is a nurturer. A leader can be the one that takes it through a crisis. A leader could be the one that reinvents it. A leader can be the one that just sees it grow successfully. An entrepreneur’s remit is it’s not that it’s any smaller than that it’s just that their focus is different that’s all but the same innate abilities and talents are required. But for example if it was to take an organisation through a crisis that requires a very different skill than creating an organisation from scratch. So it’s the same innate abilities in terms of leading and inspiring and getting the right people around you and valuing difference but then the skills would be rather different

Follower 4’s response highlights the overlap between her successful leadership description and successful entrepreneurship description which also highlights the requirement of women to do gender well and simultaneously do gender differently, going against their socially perceived sex category and gender behaviour (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Follower 4’s response begins by outlining successful leadership, describing the individual leader as a “nurturer”, leads through a “crisis”, enables the business to “grow successfully”. At this point she recognises that her description is not dissimilar to her response to the question on entrepreneurship as she draws upon the same feminine description “nurturer”. However, Follower 4 also places an emphasis on growth at which point she draws a comparison with entrepreneurship.

Drawing upon extant entrepreneurship research, the economic growth argument has significantly shaped the discourse of entrepreneurship research (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a) as a masculine growth rationale is drawn upon to measure success (Fenwick, 2002; Marlow, 2006; Graham, 2005; Patterson and Mavin, 2009).

Considered in isolation, this understanding perpetuates gendered understandings of entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006), however, given the outlined need from Follower 4's description for both masculinities and femininities within both processes of entrepreneurship and leadership, contradictions are surfaced which work against binary thinking. Throughout her response Follower 4 struggles to make sense of the simultaneous similarity and difference between processes of entrepreneurship and leadership - and this thesis suggests opposing enactments of masculinities and femininities (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

This is illustrated through the overlap in her descriptions between processes before closing by contradicting herself with "the skills would be rather different" which highlights that Follower 4's interpretations of entrepreneurship and leadership are complex and cannot be understood within the gender binary.

The intertwined nature of leadership and entrepreneurship is further highlighted within Follower 1's description of successful entrepreneurship, which makes reference to leadership, therefore, supporting the exploration of entrepreneurial leadership within this thesis as a result of the clear conceptual overlaps between the understandings (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004).

Definitely look around for opportunities and then analyse those opportunities and then you know...go for that opportunity. And also if it was already a set organisation...I believe you need to be so inspirational. Inspirational to get people behind you. Get them committed. To give them the sense of this is my job, this is my baby, I want to do it you know. I think, these sort of, these, you know, you need to have these communication skill....And understanding different people understanding different leadership styles what works for you doesn't work for me. Maybe money motivates you but me, a tap on the shoulder well done, you did very well and understanding, people understanding your own weaknesses and be sort I would say or are, are competencies that a successful manager or leader or entrepreneur needs to have these sort of competencies.

Follower 1's response opens by emphasising the need for opportunity spotting within successful entrepreneurship but moves to highlight the relational aspect of the process acknowledging the involvement of others as key. The need to inspire, motivate, communicate and understand others is central within her understanding. The need for self awareness is also highlighted within her understandings of entrepreneurship outlining the need for entrepreneurs to know their "own weaknesses".

Follower 1's expectations of entrepreneurs to be self-aware, communicate well and have a strong understanding of others in order to motivate them, aligns with Kernis' (2003) understanding of authenticity characterised by individuals being aware of and coming to accept their strengths and weaknesses and developing open and transparent relationships.

Kernis' (2003) understanding has been central in developing conceptual understandings of authentic leadership (for example Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Ilies *et al.*, 2005) in relation to self awareness (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Avolio *et al.*, 2004)) being true to self and not "getting caught up in social, peer, or parental expectations" (George *et al.*, 2007: 135).

Follower 1's understanding, therefore, highlights the need to be authentic within her understanding of successful entrepreneurship. However, against a backcloth of patriarchy and the gender lens of this study this understanding is complex as the gender binary prohibits women the social flux to be exactly who they wish to be as their behaviour is always interpreted against social role expectations of appropriate gender behaviour performed through their socially perceived sex category (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Follower 4 then closes with a comment that this could be interchangeable for a "successful manager, or leader or entrepreneur", highlighting her understandings of the intertwined nature entrepreneurship, leadership and managerial processes. This further reiterates the similarities of entrepreneurship and leadership (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004) to support the convergence of the two fields.

Follower 3 also draws upon the word 'leader' within her response to the question of successful entrepreneurship:

that inspiration thing, inspirational and I think that's a great thing coz if – if you're an inspirational leader, and you're good at looking round people and talking to people. 'Good morning,' 'Good afternoon,' - even if you've had a shit day outside, as soon as you walk into that room or walk into your business, you're a changed person, be it a man or a woman and people think 'By God it's great to work for him, it's great to work for her, isn't she brilliant, isn't she great?'

Within her response to successful entrepreneurship, Follower 3 emphasises the need to be an inspirational leader, acknowledging others. Furthermore, she highlights the need for entrepreneurs to keep up appearances and even though "[they]'ve had a shit day", whether it be a "man or a woman" they must be a "changed person" so people believe that "it's great to work for him, it's great to work for her".

Follower 3 suggests that entrepreneurs must be positive in front of their team whether they feel that way or not, which goes against the understanding of authentic leadership to behave in accordance “with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings” (Hartner, 2002; 383). However, drawing upon Levitt and Hiestand’s (2004) understanding of authenticity as an ‘quest’ or ‘ongoing project’ which is understood to be contextually sensitive (Erickson, 1995; George *et al.*, 2007; Roberts *et al.*, 2009; Tracy and Trethewey, 2005) is perhaps a better way to understand how enactments of masculinities and femininities are negotiated (Levitt and Hiestand, 2004) in relation to women entrepreneurs’ social role expectations to be feminine women performed through a woman’s body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Follower 3 also denies that there are any differences in expectations of men and women, as followers should perceive both sexes as “great to work for”. This liberal perspective appears progressive (Lewis, 2006) as gender is no longer perceived to be an issue for women as they have the same opportunity to be perceived as “great to work for” as men according to Follower 3. However, against the patriarchal backcloth which frames this study, this liberal perspective, also drawn upon within the entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Marlow and Patton, 2005) and leadership (Kelan, 2008) theory base conceals women’s disadvantage (Lewis, 2006). Denying differences exist allows gender differences to go unnoticed (Styhre *et al.*, 2005) enabling masculine hegemony to prevail (Knight and Kerfoot, 2004) perpetuating women’s position as the ‘Other’ against a backcloth of patriarchy.

Follower constructions of successful entrepreneurship and leadership overlap, highlighting similarities across meanings as the understandings intertwine, justifying the exploration of the emerging concept of entrepreneurial leadership. Furthermore, followers’ constructions of both entrepreneurship and leadership suggest the need for both simultaneous enactments of masculinities and femininities (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) which are contradictory expectations that challenge the gender binary highlighting the complexity of gender within the process.

6.3.2 Women the Same and Different to Men

Followers were asked ‘what does having a woman boss mean to you?’. Reflecting upon asking this question I recognise that an immediate comparison to men is drawn, reproducing gendered assumptions and rebuilding the gender dualism/binary, therefore,

upon reflection I wish I had not asked the question in the way that I did. This discussion reflects the debate on reproducing gendered assumptions outlined in Chapter Two (see section 2.7) which explores gender complexities.

I am aware of the implications of reproducing the binary in the questions I ask, however, given the FSR approach in this thesis for me to not include this data in the analysis would result in me making an authorial choice to silence followers' voices which contradicts the FSR value of providing my participants with the space to articulate their concrete experiences (Collins, 1990: 209). Consequently, the priority for this study, given the FSR approach, is to remain reflexive regards the reproduction of gendered assumptions which is explored within Chapter Eight (see section 8.4). Furthermore, followers' responses to this question offer further insight into their constructions of women entrepreneurs.

A further comment in relation to the question posed to followers is the word 'boss', which was substituted for the word women entrepreneur leader, following feedback received from followers in the first stage of interviewing (highlighted in Chapter Five). Followers perceived the term woman entrepreneur leader to be too much of an academic term and suggested 'boss' as an alternative word that had resonance for them. Their language choice is interesting given the masculine connotations associated with the word 'boss' and their comfort and understanding with the term.

Follower 1 responds to the question with;

Well different to a man...I don't think there is any difference between a man or a woman, you know. There are certain aspects probably are softer you know, when it comes to certain things. So softer, if for instance if you've got family issues if you've got family issues they understand you know and no it's ok it's ok. Well I mean whenever I mean I understand sometimes bosses can be a little bit, you know, awkward when you've got family issues, you've got like illness or anything. And certainly in [woman entrepreneur's name] she's just, you know, she's so understanding when it comes to that sort of stuff. She understands. I know my colleague's got a child and whenever he needs to go, you know, any problems with, you know, his child she just has no problems. She's so understanding. Whereas in men's case probably they won't say ok because probably their wives deal with it mostly. So in that aspect I would say yeah, I mean it's, everything's got its advantages and disadvantages.

Follower 1 initially asserts her perception of difference between women and men through her assertion of “well different to a man” positioning her initial response within gendered understandings of women and men being different against a patriarchal backcloth (Walby, 1989). However, she then reverses her claim to say that she does not “think there is any difference between a man or a woman” indicating that there are similarities before moving on to say that women and men are different “when it comes to certain things” suggesting a co-existence of similarities and differences between the sexes as she to’s and fro’s between difference and non-difference. Follower 1’s initial response develops into a subjective understanding of gender (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2000) whereby there are differences and similarities, suggesting a need for social flux between symbolic spaces (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004; Gherardi, 1994). Her extract then provides an illustrative example which highlights her understanding of women and men’s different views on childcare responsibilities which she constructs positively. Follower 1 outlines how her woman entrepreneur leader is “understanding” in relation to “family issues” and she is not “awkward” if followers need to leave work for “that sort of stuff”.

The example further illustrates that her woman entrepreneur does not perceive “family issues” to be solely women’s responsibility, as the example Follower 1 draws upon centres upon a male colleague. She states that “whenever he needs to go, you know, any problems with, you know, his child she just has no problems. She’s so understanding.”. This example could be perceived as an attempt to disrupt understandings of Walby’s (1989) patriarchal structure of ‘patriarchal mode of production’ which understands the domestic division of labour to be solely women’s responsibility, as Follower 1 outlines how her woman entrepreneur leader allows a male follower to undo gender (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007; Messerschmidt, 2009; Risman, 2009). This behaviour is not something which Follower 1 believes a man boss would allow as she suggests that a man would not permit a man follower to leave the workplace for childcare duties because he would perceive it to be their wife’s role within the patriarchal structure of mode of production (Walby, 1989).

Follower 1’s gendered interpretation of having a woman entrepreneur leader is, therefore, positioned as advantageous in relation to family issues, and certainly from a feminist perspective is progressive in terms of attempting to disrupt a patriarchal structure which positions domestic labour as only women’s responsibility. However, Follower 1 closes by suggesting that “everything’s got its advantages and disadvantages”, highlighting that there are disadvantages but does not outline what such disadvantages are.

Through Follower 1's example, her woman entrepreneur does gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) through her socially perceived feminine behaviour in her concern and understanding of her followers' child care responsibilities through a socially perceived woman's body. However, the woman entrepreneur is able to undo gender by doing gender well in the sense that she recognises child care as both men and women's responsibility, challenging the social order. In doing gender well through the femininities she enacts, she does not jolt assumptions of appropriate gender behaviour for women (Mavin, 2009a, b) which enables her to do undo gender in a socially acceptable way highlighting the complexities of experiences of gender within a process of entrepreneurial leadership.

At the beginning of the extract Follower 1 highlights women's differences as 'softer', a feminine description (Gherardi, 1994; Hines, 1992; Grant, 1988; Marshall, 1993) not associated with entrepreneurial leadership (as outlined in Chapter Four) but is aligned with gendered leadership evaluations within Eagly and Carli's (2007) framework of communal leadership behaviour, sex role stereotyped to women (Mavin, 2009a, b).

The language drawn upon by Follower 1 suggests how her perceptions of her women entrepreneur leader are grounded within a patriarchal backcloth, gendering her perspectives. A consequence, of Follower 1's gendered perspective is that her women entrepreneur leader is behaving within the boundary of her social role expectations as she is perceived to be doing gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Martin, 2006) by conforming to understandings of being a feminine woman (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000).

Follower 1's women entrepreneur leader, therefore, does not jolt her follower's assumptions (Mavin, 2009a, b) of how she is expected to behave as a woman. However, whilst Follower 1 comments positively in relation to how her women entrepreneur leader does gender through her understanding of 'family issues' and her 'softer approach', she remains silent on the negative aspects of doing gender nor does she highlight positive or negative aspects of her women entrepreneur leader undoing gender (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007; Risman, 2009; Messerschmidt, 2009).

Follower 2's response drew immediate comparisons between men and women:

I haven't worked for a man before so I cannot compare it but women are probably a lot easier, but in some aspects sometimes they're not though as well so, it's just easy to get along with and the fact that she's willing to like be - oh lost the word now. Like she will like negotiate and be willing to work around you, which er, it's a lot better that way because you get on a lot better if you're willing to work round things together. It can work both ways really.

Despite admitting that she has never worked for a man and stating that she cannot compare, Follower 2 draws upon difference stating that women are "a lot easier". She immediately contradicts herself with the opposing thought, "sometimes they're not though as well", before returning back to her original assertion that woman in fact are "easy to get along with" because they are willing to "negotiate" and "work around you" which Follower 2 suggests is advantageous for the relationship indicating that as a result this is reciprocal.

Although Follower 2 has never worked for a man before, she immediately makes a comparison, highlighting the power of a patriarchal backcloth, as patriarchal structures have permeated our understandings of organisations to such an extent that men are constructed as effective leaders (Katila and Merilainen, 2002; Nicolson, 1996, Walby, 1989, Butler, 1990).

Followers, therefore, identify women as lacking (Katila and Merilainen, 2002) and different (Lewis, 2009) in relation to men because they embody difference through their socially perceived sex category (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Follower 2's initial response, therefore, works within binary understandings of gender.

Follower 2 further supports her perception that women are "easier" than men through her description of her woman entrepreneur leader's willingness to "negotiate" and work around her followers. Similar to Follower 1, the language drawn upon by Follower 2 aligns with Eagly and Carli's (2007) communal leadership behaviour which is sex role stereotyped to women (Mavin, 2009a, b).

Follower 2's perceptions work within the given gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b) further highlighting how her understandings are grounded within a patriarchal understanding, further perpetuates the sexual division of labour (Walby, 1989; Gherardi, 1994) and maintenance of the gender hierarchy (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004). Follower 2's response highlights the influence of patriarchal understandings in shaping her gendered perceptions of women and men within entrepreneurial leadership.

Despite not having direct experience working for a man, the influence of gendered social constructions of entrepreneurs and leaders, equating men and masculinity, positioning men as effective, does not jolt assumptions (Mavin, 2009a, b) and, therefore, an acceptable generalisation to make against a patriarchal backcloth. Within Follower 2's response, her experiences are framed by a patriarchal backcloth (Walby, 1989) as she relies upon understandings of social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) that women are feminine and behave in a communal way (Eagly and Carli, 2007, 2008).

Follower 4 opens her response by stating that her experiences with women entrepreneur leaders generally have not been positive:

My experience of female bosses hasn't been particularly positive. In my career I've had one very positive experience but the majority of my experiences working for women has been quite a negative one. Competition more than anything else, competition. For me a leader needs to be aware that, not needs to be aware but a leader needs to be secure himself and build a team around them that is better than them and my experiences have been that that's what these women have done but then suddenly felt quite threatened by it. Certainly not what [woman entrepreneurs name] does and that's probably why we get on really well.

Follower 4 sets the context of her negative experiences working for women before highlighting one exception. She attributes her general perception of "negative" experiences working for women to "competition". Focusing on Follower 4's use of language, "competition" is an agentic description within Eagly and Carli (2007, 2008). As Mavin (2009b) contends within her analysis of Eagly and Carli's framework (2007, 2008), agentic qualities and behaviours are associated with effective leadership, masculinity and agentic behaviour is, therefore, equated with men. Consequently, although competition is regarded as effective leadership behaviour, for women to behave in an agentic way jolts our assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) of what we perceive as appropriate behaviour for women as it contravenes their social role expectations to be feminine women (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000).

Whilst this study uses the female pronoun to refer to all followers (and therefore does not denote their actual sex category), it is worthy of note that Follower 4's comment of her experiences working for women not being "particularly positive", could be an example of misogyny or possibly female misogyny (Mavin, 2006a; b). Mavin (2006a; b) argues that an understanding of female misogyny provides a useful framework to explore the relationships between women. This is important so that discussions of gender do not become debates of men v's women.

Follower 4 then describes her expectation of a leader to "be secure himself and build a team around them that is better than them". Her use of the male pronoun highlights her non-reflexive gender practice (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010), as although the question is asked about women bosses, she positions men as the norm within entrepreneurial leadership. Furthermore, Follower 4 suggests that women entrepreneur leaders do build successful teams but feel threatened by it. However, she separates her respective woman entrepreneur leader's behaviour as different to the negative experiences she describes of other women. Follower 4 clearly asserts that her woman entrepreneur leader does not behave in this way which she attributes as the reason that they get along really well, highlighting the professionalism (Lewis, 2009).

Follower 4's extract homogenises women, suggesting that they resist their gender social role expectations by behaving in an agentic way (Eagly and Carli, 2007, 2008) by being competitive, jolting our assumptions (Mavin, 2009a, b) against a backdrop of patriarchy, where women are expected to be feminine (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000). However, she separates her women entrepreneur leader out as different and consequently more positive. Follower 4 suggests that her women entrepreneur leader does not engage in competition, therefore, she does not challenge assumptions (Mavin, 2009a, b) and, therefore, is perceived more positively as she does not provoke misogynistic or female misogynistic attitudes or behaviours (Mavin, 2006a, b) in her followers.

Follower 5 begins by suggesting that there are no differences between men and women:

It shouldn't make any difference at all. Providing that they're, got the right frame of mind and that they've got a duty of care to their employees. And I can't, I don't differentiate a man or a woman. It doesn't make any difference to me.

Follower 5's assertion claims that there are no differences between men and women, before amending slightly through her clarification that they must have "the right frame of mind" and a "duty of care". Given patriarchal understanding which provides the backcloth and context of this thesis, the "right frame of mind" could be understood to be masculine, agentic behaviours, positioned as effective leadership behaviours (Mavin, 2009b). A "duty of care" description is separated from the "right frame of mind" description, which is more aligned to communal behaviours of compassionate, kind and helpful (Eagly and Carli, 2007, 2008). Follower 5's outline of her expectations highlights the need for a dual presence across symbolic spaces of masculinity and femininity (Gherardi, 1994). Her final remark, asserts her denial of difference as she keeps gender out (Lewis, 2006, 2009) to reduce the pressure of visibility (Simpson and Lewis, 2005), and resisting the gender social order (Nencel, 2010), stating that she cannot and does not "differentiate a man or woman". In perceiving there to be no difference between men and women, and recognising the need for both communal and agentic behaviours (Eagly and Carli, 2007), follower 5's response opens up the possibility to interpret her expressions in more than one way, highlighting the potential for multiple understandings of follower perceptions of the entrepreneurial leadership process.

The contradiction within her voice as Follower 4 tries to articulate her experiences of her woman entrepreneur leader highlights her 'double talk or double speak' which Grandy and Mavin (2010) suggests highlights how participants are unsure about what to do with such contradictions. This highlights the gender complexities that Follower 4 experiences within a process of entrepreneurial leadership, which supports answering the overall research question which guides this thesis "leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?".

I recognise that this is a small sample, therefore, findings cannot be generalised but drawing upon the specific participating cases discussed, followers move between similarities and differences of women and men as their experiences conform and also oppose to gender social role expectations. They perhaps unreflexively, do and undo gender simultaneously as they move between understandings of difference and sameness of women to men within their descriptions and struggle with the discomfort with undoing gender by doing gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Whilst they recognise a need for a dual presence across symbolic spaces (Gherardi, 1994), aligned with Bruni *et al.*'s., (2004a) process of 'managing the dual presence', with the understanding that gender and entrepreneurship are performed by constantly shuttling between the dichotomous symbolic spaces of masculinity and femininity, they also draw upon differences to defend the symbolic spaces, a process which Bruni *et al.*, (2004a) refer to as 'boundary keeping'.

6.3.3 Trust

This follower theme of experience emerged from followers' responses to question "do you trust your boss and why?" Given the importance placed upon trust within the authentic leadership literature (e.g. Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Gardner *et al.*, 2005) all followers were asked whether they trusted their woman entrepreneur and *why* to explore follower perspectives through a gender lens. All of the followers stated that they trusted their respective woman entrepreneurs, however, their reasons for doing so differed. Follower 4 explained that it was simply her woman entrepreneur leaders "integrity" and "professionalism" (Follower 4), but Follower 2's trust in her woman entrepreneur leader has built over time through experiences of fairness and because she has "known her from when [they] first opened". She illustrates her point by explaining the flexibility when covering shifts:

I think she's very fair because I've known her from when we first opened as well em you get to build like that trust with someone as well and....like we're both working like...like negotiating work around things say for example if someone cannot come in I would maybe do them extra days if I if I could possibly and just same way round as well

Follower 2 supports her evaluation of her woman entrepreneur leader being fair by reiterating the length of time she has known her and visibility witnessing her woman entrepreneur leader in action, providing her with the authority to make such a judgement. This aligns with Gardner *et al.*'s., (2005) understanding that high levels of trust will be elicited by followers when they view their leaders to be genuine, reliable and displaying high levels of integrity. Follower 2's experience of viewing her woman entrepreneur leaders behaviour over time has built trust, enabling the development of "networks of collaborative relationships" (Avolio *et al.*, 2004: 806) highlighting follower agency which aligns with understandings of authentic leadership (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Avolio *et al.*, 2004).

Follower 2 highlights “negotiating work” is something that she is amenable to, illustrating the collaboration and “willingness to co-operate with the leader for the benefit of the organisation” (Avolio *et al.*, 2004: 810), further highlighting the reciprocal nature of the process (Hosking and Morley, 1991) of entrepreneurial leadership. From a gender perspective, engaging in such ‘negotiations’ within the entrepreneurial leadership process, a description located within communal behaviour (Eagly and Carli, 2007, 2008) is sex role stereotyped to women, therefore, positioning a negotiating approach as the ‘Other’ (Butler, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1953) leadership within patriarchal understandings of the gender social order. Furthermore, the emphasis that Follower 2 places on the importance of developing trust overtime supports Eagly’s (2005) assertion that women are not automatically bestowed leadership legitimacy, and are, therefore, required within the context of authentic leadership to engage in processes of negotiation and persuasion with their followers.

Follower 3 attributes her reason for trusting her boss as her change to a more honest and open approach to communication as she has become more inclusive:

on a business side I would trust her because...nowadays we sit down and we discuss things so before she does anything we’ll talk about it erm and I think she’s seen the need of doing that and I think that’s just lately over the last weeks rather than years erm and I think she used to she used to hold a lot of things to her chest and you could say ‘What’s the matter with you [woman entrepreneurs name] you’re not yourself?’ you know erm....and then she would say ‘Oh I’m alright I’m alright I’m going to do this I’m going to do that’ and she would do it like on the computer and then we would say ‘Well how’s things happening?’ ‘Well we’ve made that much money’ ‘Oh but we haven’t made anything’ and but now it’s being open it’s having a good communication link which we’ve got you know

Follower 3 describes trust as openness and involvement within a business. She feels ‘listened to’ and included with decision making within the business, creating greater transparency between her and her woman entrepreneur leader, which Gardner *et al* (2005) call for within the concept of authentic leadership. Furthermore, Follower 3 highlights how her woman entrepreneur leader is open to others viewpoints, creating an environment of collaboration with her followers which Avolio *et al.*, (2004) suggest followers recognise to be authentic. She further notes that this has been a recent change in her woman entrepreneur leader’s behaviour and something she developed over time, therefore, suggesting openness is not something that her woman entrepreneur leader feels comfortable with or felt she should or could, engage with initially. However, such transparency is clearly an expectation of her from Follower 3’s perspective.

As Gardner *et al.*, (2009) suggest, the extent to which the entrepreneur leader is perceived to adhere to the principles that are acceptable to the follower, in this case the need for open and honest communication, enables positive and trustworthy perceptions of the woman entrepreneur leader as she is perceived to have integrity as the congruence between her words and behaviour increases (Mayer *et al.*, 1995). Follower 3, therefore highlights that women entrepreneur leaders should be visibly transparent for followers to develop trustworthy perceptions. This is a key requirement of authentic leadership in terms of relational transparency (Gardner *et al.*, 2005) but is also complex from a gender perspective. For women entrepreneurs to be perceived as successful within a process of entrepreneurial leadership, she must go against her socially perceived sex category and do gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) whilst also conforming to her gender social role expectations to be a feminine woman (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000). The women entrepreneurs, therefore, simultaneously do gender well and do gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), destabilising the gender order and jolting followers' assumptions (Mavin, 2009b). Consequently, the multiple enactments of masculinities and femininities need to be visible and transparent in terms of how this informs their decisions and behaviour to build follower trust, progressing understandings of how gender is experienced within entrepreneurial leadership from a follower perspective.

The behaviour which Follower 3 describes of her woman entrepreneur leader which did not develop trustworthy perception of her i.e. holding "a lot of things to her chest" suggest that her behaviour was more self-sufficient, detached and independent in dealing with business issues. Ahl (2006) draws upon such descriptions to highlight entrepreneurship as a masculine construction, drawing upon Bem's (1981) masculine descriptions. Therefore, against these descriptions Follower 3's woman entrepreneur leaders natural/ more comfortable behaviour could be aligned more to masculine, agentic behaviours (Eagly and Carli, 2007, 2008) jolting assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) of how she would be expected to behave as a feminine woman against a backcloth of patriarchy. By Follower 3's perception of her woman entrepreneur leader undoing gender (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007; Risman, 2009; Messerschmidt, 2009) by going against her social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) to be a feminine woman creates a fault line (Eagly, 2005). It is unsurprising that Follower 3 did not develop trustworthy perceptions of her woman entrepreneur leader when witnessing behaviour which created a fault line (Eagly, 2005) between her social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) and her entrepreneurial leadership role. Given patriarchal structures, and stereotypical

expectations placed on the sexes, followers would not expect for a man to be “inclusive” and “open”.

Follower 1’s response to why she felt, or thought she trusted her boss, highlights the fault line (Eagly, 2005) referred to above, as she separates her woman entrepreneur leader’s role within the entrepreneurial leadership process from her social role as a woman:

I would say yeah she’s a trust trustworthy person yeah. She, you can you can rely on her you. She’s trust, she is trustworthy, she is you know. I mean yeah I would I, I can trust her in many aspects. You know what I say sometimes negative things it’s regarding the business regarding the leadership the management skills but I do trust her I think she’s a kind and nice person. I don’t have doubt in that one yeah.

By separating her woman entrepreneur leader’s social role from her position with the entrepreneurial leadership process, Follower 1 perceives her woman entrepreneur leader as trustworthy. Follower 1’s description of her woman entrepreneur leader as “a kind and nice person” satisfies her social role expectations as a feminine woman, thereby doing gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Martin, 2006). Follower 1 explains that when she sometimes says “negative things it’s regarding the business”, therefore, indicating that her trust from a business perspective is different from the trust she has of her woman entrepreneur leader as a woman, separating the symbolic space of entrepreneurial leadership from the social role space. Follower 1’s further extract highlights how her woman entrepreneur leader’s authority fluctuates within the organisational context:

I think, I think although she, she’s got kind of authorities you know, but certain times she she lacks that authority. She, she, she, she comes and you know certain things rather than being upfront with people sometimes I think she sends [a male colleague] to tell people off...or [another male colleague]...to go and have a word with people. I mean with the staff sometimes I think sometimes she’s maybe she’s too nice you know she’s too kind she’s too nice so I think she sometimes although she’s definitely got the authority you can feel that when she’s there you know. So people know their places because as soon as she’s not there there are too many Chiefs, not enough Indians you know. But when she’s there definitely everybody else they are the Indians you know she’s the Chief.

When reflecting upon her woman entrepreneur leader within the business context, Follower 1's voice is contradictory. She suggests that her woman entrepreneur leader has "got kind of authorities" but then immediately follows this up by saying that she "lacks authority". Follower 1 attributes her woman entrepreneur leader's lack of authority to sending male colleagues to perform a masculine behaviour "to tell people off" claiming that she is "too nice" and "too kind", outlining feminine behaviours not associated with effective leadership. Follower 1 then returns back to her assertion that she has got an authority that "you can feel" when she is present. She further describes this using a masculine analogy of a Chief and Indians, highlighting her non-reflexive gender practice (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010). She suggests that her woman entrepreneur leader is clearly the Chief, however, Follower 1 indicates that in her absence there is a jostling of power between followers suggesting that there are "too many Chiefs, not enough Indians" constructing an image of disorder and chaos. This is only calmed when her woman entrepreneur leader returns and everyone knows their place as "Indians" because "she's the Chief" with the authority. Follower 1, moves between descriptions of her woman entrepreneur leader's authority and lack of authority. She, therefore, draws upon a separation strategy of her woman entrepreneur leader as a person and as her role within the entrepreneurial leadership process to highlight the trust she has for her woman entrepreneur leader, enabling the co-existence of opposing views within the gender dualism.

6.3.4 I Want to be Led...I Want to be an Equal

Followers were asked "how would you like to be led in an ideal world?" Their responses highlighted the contradiction across their expectations of the leadership process, with the co-existence of opposing needs and wants. Follower 4's response highlights her perception of leadership expectations:

There are times when I want to be led. There are times when I want affirmation.
There are times when I'm, I just want to work through something.

Follower 4 expresses her changing leadership needs, "to be led", a desire for "affirmation", and situations when she simply wishes to "work through something" herself. Her competing needs within her construction of the ideal leadership process highlights the varying expectations she places on a leader within the process.

At times she expects the leader to lead her in an authoritative way, on other occasions she simply requires “affirmation” to go ahead with her ideas, at other times she wants to be left alone to work through something for herself. This highlights Follower 4’s expectation of her leader to be able to move across symbolic spaces (Gherardi, 1994) in order to meet different demands of the different approaches and behaviours she expects from her leader. Furthermore, for a leader to know and sense the different situations which demand different approaches requires an open and transparent relationship which Gardner *et al.*, (2005) suggest authentic leadership enables.

Follower 1’s construction of an ideal leader also places great expectation on the leader in relation to the differing approaches expected. Her description is focused upon an individual leader rather than the process of leadership:

I would like to be led with an inspirational leader. I would like to be led by a person who is driven. Who is successful. Who is committed a hundred percent and who doesn’t make, who allows you, who gives you responsibilities. Who leads you in a way you know there is no leading aspect of the business completely out of the window, it’s not even questioned it’s not, it doesn’t exist. I would like somebody, a leader who is a coach as well, who is a mentor.

Follower 1 outlines agentic (Eagly and Carli, 2007, 2008), masculine expectations of “driven”, “successful” and “committed” before describing her need to have “responsibilities”. She then outlines her desire for her leader to take on the role of a “coach” and “mentor”, highlighting communal expectations within leadership approaches (Eagly and Carli, 2007, 2008). Drawing upon both agentic and communal leadership behaviours highlights Follower 1’s ideal leadership construction which blurs the boundaries of the symbolic spaces of masculinity and femininity (Gherardi, 1994) has social flux is required.

Follower 5 also outlines her competing expectations from the leadership process:

As an equal, but if there’s a leader there, somewhere along the line you need a captain of a ship. And there will be times when decisions have to be made that maybe can’t be done in a discussion sort of forum. And em, as long as you know that you have the confidence in your leader, the rest is just people skills. You can get the best out of people.

Follower 5's voice reveals how she would like to be an "equal" whilst also recognising that situations may call for "a captain of a ship" to lead without engaging in a "discussion sort of forum". This example of "a captain of a ship" is a traditionally male role, highlighting her non-reflexive gendered practice (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010) as her construction of ideal leadership draws upon a masculine image. Follower 5 continues by emphasizing that this change is acceptable when "you have the confidence in your leader, the rest is just people skills". Given the masculine construction of leadership which she outlines, it is far more complex for a woman to gain 'confidence' from her followers. Women embody difference, therefore, before they speak or act they are marked as different and an outsiders (Eagly, 2005; Kantola, 2008) within the leadership domain. Consequently, for women to gain such "confidence" is a far more difficult task. If they behave in a masculine, agentic (Eagly and Carli, 2007) constructed as effective leadership, they jolt assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) as there is social role incongruity (Eagly and Carli, 2002) between their social role expectations to be feminine women (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) and their behaviour to be perceived as successful entrepreneurial leaders.

Furthermore, follower 5 suggests that "the rest is just people skills", implying skills such as interpersonal, supportive and friendly which are associated with communal behaviour (Eagly and Carli, 2007) are less important with the use of the word "just". This reinforces behaviour associated with femininity, which is sex role stereotyped to women, positioned in second place and 'Other' (Butler, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1953) against a backcloth of patriarchy. Follower 5's construction of her ideal leadership is, therefore, complex for women as they are expected to move between symbolic spaces of masculinity and femininity (Gherardi, 1994) but against the backcloth, social flux is prohibited as both men and women are expected to work within the given (Mavin, 2009) gender dualism. Followers' perceptions and expectations of ideal leadership, therefore, require a disruption of the gender binary to allow leaders the fluidity to move between symbolic spaces (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) without jolting assumption and being labelled ineffective if they contravene gendered social role expectations against the patriarchal backcloth.

6.3.5 Tried and Tested (She's doing it)

Followers were asked whether they thought their women entrepreneur leaders were credible and *how*. The overwhelming response was yes; attributed to what the women entrepreneur leaders were currently 'doing' within their businesses or what they had 'done' previously. Follower 2 places emphasis upon how hard her woman entrepreneur leader tries:

I think she's just really trying her hardest to like to try and become an entrepreneur. And just she's just really trying to get this place lifted off and just try and maintain it for when there is bad like quiet spells...she's like really hard working and she's just trying to, she's just really trying to get everything up and running....And trying to make things work and trying different things, which sometimes don't work out but you've just you've got to try them to see, to see what will work, what won't work with new businesses.

In witnessing her woman entrepreneur leader's hard work, Follower 2 feels that she is credible. Her response implies that she is trying to "become an entrepreneur" suggesting that Follower 2 does yet perceive her woman entrepreneur leader to be an entrepreneur. Credibility is, therefore, not understood to be an evaluation of successful growth as outlined within the entrepreneurship literature (Fenwick, 2002; Marlow, 2006; Graham, 2005; Patterson and Mavin, 2009), but rather witnessing evidence of hard work and effort in her "trying" and getting through "quiet spells". Follower 2 suggests that her woman entrepreneur leader's credibility has developed, and to an extent earned, through her hard work rather than assumed credibility because of her position as the founder and owner of the business. Therefore, visibility (Simpson and Lewis, 2005) of the woman entrepreneur leaders' efforts within the business are important in developing favourable followers' perceptions of credibility and success.

Follower 4 also attributes her woman entrepreneur leaders' success to her current actions and behaviour:

She's doing it and she's doing it very successfully and I'd like her to wake up to that I'd love her to wake up to that.

Follower 4 also justifies her woman entrepreneur leaders' credibility to what she is "doing". However, unlike Follower 2, Follower 4 believes her woman entrepreneur leader to be successful but does not think that her woman entrepreneur leader believes herself to be successful and wishes for her to "wake up" to her success.

Given confidence, self-assured behaviour to be masculine, agentic behaviours (Eagly and Carli, 2007), perhaps Follower 4's woman entrepreneur leader's lack of confidence, which is a feminine behaviour, supports her perceived success and acceptance within the entrepreneurial leadership process, in doing gender and meeting her social expectation as a feminine woman (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000).

Follower 5 also draws upon her woman entrepreneur leaders' experience, to support and justify her perceived credibility:

Because of the length of time she's been doing it. She's tried and tested and that's the secret ingredient isn't it? Can you do the job?...I mean when she first started out she started out as a worker many years ago, so, what I mean is that she wouldn't have had the experience that she's got today she's worked her way up and that's probably the best way to do it so she knows how her workers feel, she knows the frustrations they have or you know or whatever problems they are gonna come up with she's been there and got the t-shirt so I think that is probably her greatest strength.

Follower 5 suggests that her woman entrepreneur leader's experience within the job role before setting up, provides her with an understanding of the "frustrations" and "problems" that her workers must contend with. Follower 5 suggests that her woman entrepreneur leader is perhaps in an appropriate position, given her experience and being perceived to be "tried and tested", to "promote a set of values on behalf of a community" (Eagly, 2005: 459) and, therefore, achieve relational authenticity, because she has an understanding of a worker perspective. Consequently, her followers may believe her to be a legitimate leader and feel comfortable for her to promote and represent their values on behalf of their community (Eagly, 2005) increasing her perceived levels of authenticity within the entrepreneurial leadership process.

Whilst followers' constructions of their woman entrepreneur leaders' credibility is positive it aligns with Eagly's (2005) assertion that women are not bestowed leadership legitimacy by holding a leadership position. However, rather than through direct negotiation and persuasion which Eagly (2005) argues, women entrepreneur leaders are required to prove themselves to followers through their visible action.

6.3.6 Celebrating success

Across follower voices, there is evidence of celebration of their woman entrepreneur leaders. Follower 3 outlines her admiration for her woman entrepreneur leader:

You do admire her on her achievement. 'Erm, you do sometimes worry because you see that sometimes if things are not going right, she's not as inspirational as she has been. It does affect her, er, but she has the tenacity, I would say, to bounce back and sort of adapt and re-focus herself and take stock. Sometimes I really feel that she's better than what she is, you know. She could be a lot better than what she is.

Follower 3's initial celebration of her admiration for her woman entrepreneur leader is contradicted through her concern for her woman entrepreneur leader not being "as inspirational as she has been". She follows this statement up by suggesting that she has the "tenacity" to "bounce back" and the potential to be "better than what she is". Perhaps suggesting that Follower 3's woman entrepreneur has a lack of confidence that she does not realise how effective she is. Furthermore, the extract highlights Follower 3's belief in her woman entrepreneur leader even perhaps when she does not believe in herself.

Follower 4's response celebrates her woman entrepreneur leader's success and the positive impact for her followers:

I don't think there's anything else I think that's about it really. I think having [woman entrepreneurs name] as a boss you know that you're set for life and you're secure because she's never going to be without work. She's just so well, she's just so driven and bloody good at what she does, not bloody, *extremely* good at what she does, so I think if you're with her you're alright you're going to be alright.

Follower 4's description of her woman entrepreneur leader as "driven", a masculine and agentic description (Eagly and Carli, 2007, 2008) and being "extremely good" at what she does, providing her followers with security highlights Follower 4's belief in her woman entrepreneur leader. Consequently, perceiving her woman entrepreneur leader to demonstrate masculine and agentic behaviours is reassuring for Follower 4.

Undoing gender (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007) through her “drive” and being successful, Follower 4 suggests that her woman entrepreneur leader is able to provide a “secure” environment for her followers to feel safe. Consequently, the behaviours of her woman entrepreneur leader which undo gender, resisting gender practice (Nencel, 2010), result in an outcome which reinforces gender practice (Nencel, 2010) as she protects her followers.

Follower 5 celebrates that her woman entrepreneur leader is an example of a successful woman:

The positive side is that that there's not many women bosses around, so it's nice to see a woman. She's just got the ability to do what she does. I think it's hard to put into words you just accept her for what she is. She's successful. She's there for her staff she's there for the clients...and she seems as an all rounder to have er to achieve I think what she set out to achieve

Follower 5 celebrates her woman entrepreneur leader for who she is in relation to abilities and the fact she is an “all rounder”. She attributes her success to her woman entrepreneur leader's abilities but suggests that it is “hard to put into words you just accept her for what she is” as “successful”. Follower 5's struggle to articulate her woman entrepreneur leader highlights the complexity to capture her abilities and success without labelling. However, follower 5 attempts to encapsulate her meaning through “an all rounder” highlighting the co-existence of opposing views. Her ambiguity opens up the possibility to interpret expressions in more than one way.

6.3.7 Need to be Self-Aware

The need for self awareness within the entrepreneurial leadership process emerged across followers' voices.

Follower 3 expresses how she would expect her woman entrepreneur leader to clearly communicate her values to followers:

This is my values, what I want you to do is have the same values as me be a different character of course but also this is what I'm expecting from our company and I want you to portray that now if your employees are not giving that back to be quite honestly you just need to get rid of them, there's thousands of people out there looking for work I mean you've got to give them the opportunity to turn with the training and the development and everything

Follower 3 would expect that the woman entrepreneur leaders' values would set the expectations of the company and in turn expect followers to behave in accordance with them. Follower 3 suggests that followers should adapt to their woman entrepreneur leaders' values, proposing training and development as a means of doing so. If followers do not buy into their woman entrepreneur leaders values Follower 3 advises women to "to get rid of them".

The authentic leadership literature highlights the need for leaders to transparently convey their values and beliefs with their followers (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Avolio *et al.*, 2004), however, it does not outline how this can be achieved (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010) or the course of action should they resist through their agency.

When Follower 4 was asked how she would like to be led in an ideal world, she draws upon her experience of a man entrepreneur leader to describe his self-awareness inspires her:

very integrous absolutely and utterly trustworthy complete confidentiality in everything that we do and how we do it...he says it exactly as it is there's no holds barred and no holding back he's completely congruent as a person and in and in his 'em...givingness if that makes any sense and for me for a leader that's the number one thing you must be congruent em so they need to be able to identify with self, and I suppose that', that's what inspires me very much about him

The very fact that without hesitation Follower 4 associates ideal leadership with men highlights within her non-reflexive gender practise, deeply embedded gendered understandings of leadership. Against a patriarchal backcloth, a man taking up a leadership position does not jolt assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) as masculine constructions of leadership (Schnurr, 2008; Eagly and Carli, 2003, 2007, 2008; Eagly, 2005, 2007; Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000; Sinclair, 1998; Hearn and Park 1998; Calas and Smircich, 1996) bestow him leadership legitimacy by his very sex (Eagly, 2005).

Although, Follower 4 does not use the specific word, her description suggests authenticity. A man entrepreneur leader's 'congruence' between what "he says" and his awareness of self makes Follower 4 "absolutely and utterly" trust him. However, achieving authenticity is argued by Eagly, (2005) to be easier for men than women given they are sex role stereotyped as feminine, communal and, therefore, ineffectual leaders (Mavin, 2009b).

Men start off with the 'right' sex to be a leader against a patriarchal backcloth, therefore, their social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) and entrepreneurial leadership expectations developed within patriarchal structures of mode of production, state, relations in paid labour and culture (Walby, 1989) do not jolt follower assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) of their behaviour as men and within the entrepreneurial leadership process.

As follower 5 reflects upon her expectations of her woman entrepreneur leader she draws upon the need for self-awareness:

You've gotta have big ears to hear what's goin on all over the place; eyes in the back of your head because you need to be able to see what's going on, you've gotta be emm hardworker, it's not like no way is it like 9 till 5 you've gotta be willing to work whatever it takes and you've gotta have the ideas and be willing to diversify if things need to be changed you need to be able to spot the gaps wherever they are 'emmm I think you got to be I think you've gotta know your limitations but be willing to stretch as much as you can

The need to be visible (Simpson and Lewis, 2005) in relation to being perceived to be a "hardworker", working above and beyond "9 till 5" norm to "be willing to work whatever it takes". The importance of self-awareness is highlighted in relation to their limitations to push themselves.

Through my authorial strategy themes of: *entrepreneurship and leadership the same but different; women are the same and different; I want to be led...I want to be an equal; trust; tried and tested (She's doing it); celebrating success and self-awareness* were identified from followers' perceptions, highlighting many contradictions. The complexities and tensions that have emerged across follower voices highlight their 'double talk' and 'double speak' (Grandy and Mavin, 2010) which simultaneously acknowledges similarity and difference (Coupland, 2001). Grandy and Mavin (2010) argue that individuals engage in 'double talk' or 'double speak' because they struggle with the inconsistencies and contradictions within their experiences which are manifest through their 'double talk' or 'double speak'. Allowing followers to share their perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership with the emergence of 'double talk' and 'double speak' (Grandy and Mavin, 2010) is useful in terms in understanding their experiences of gender within a process of entrepreneurial leadership and contribute towards answering the research question which guides this thesis "leader and follower perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced within small firms?".

The chapter now moves from follower voices to explore the voices of the women entrepreneur leaders. Their experiences are presented under themes of experience.

6.4 Entrepreneurial Leadership Experiences

The chapter now moves to explore the voices of the women entrepreneur leaders within this study to address the second element of the research question to explore leader perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership and how gender is experienced in small firms? Their voices are presented through themes of entrepreneurial leadership experiences.

6.4.1 Struggling with Entrepreneurial Leadership

During the interviews, I shared my view of the women as women entrepreneur leaders to contextualise my understanding of how I viewed the intertwined nature of entrepreneurship and leadership. I then asked whether they viewed themselves as entrepreneur leaders. The women's responses focused on the word 'entrepreneur', as they struggled to identify with the word and questioned the relevance of the term in relation to aiding other people's understanding of what they do. **Helen's** description below highlights her resistance to the term 'entrepreneur' as she deems it be an obstacle for others understanding her role within the business:

I have been thinking about this word entrepreneur. Bumped into it a few times this year. Again it's not a word that I'm...I have any great feelings for. I don't write on anything [research participants name] being an entrepreneur doesn't cross my mind. Some of the, the 'er definitions of the word I can't relate to particularly and I think as we mentioned before I had I found myself in the kind of position of being called upon because of certain circumstances to step up...and I did that because of me, because of me, my personality, my skills, my strengths, my weaknesses and if that attaches the label entrepreneur well then so be it. But I didn't step up because I'm an entrepreneur if that makes sense...so if it's a way of people being able to label you or classify you that that helps kind of slot you in to whichever, you know, hole, box, criteria, then I think it's for other people to use the term

Helen highlights the term 'entrepreneur' as a word she has been "thinking about", indicating that the word has provoked her to reflect upon it on occasions previous to the interview. She continues by saying it is a word which she has "bumped into" a "few times" suggesting it has perhaps been problematic for her. Helen continues by describing her indifference towards the word, that she does not have "any great feelings" for it, attributing

this to her being unable to “relate” to definitions of the term, which she previously describes as “risk taking”.

As Ahl’s (2006) study highlighted entrepreneur and entrepreneurship have been constructed upon masculine terms (Mirchandani, 1999; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a, b, Lewis, 2006, 2009; Marlow *et al.*, 2009; Shaw *et al.*, 2009) creating a masculine norm which is utilised as the “yardstick” (Mirchandani, 1999: 233) to measure the extent to which women demonstrate ‘successful’ – masculine - entrepreneurial traits and behaviour (Mirchandani, 1999) enabling the dominant discourse ‘think entrepreneur’, ‘think male’ to prevail (Marlow *et al.*, 2009). Consequently, Helen’s lack of identification with the term is not surprising given its masculine alignment. Instead she places great emphasis on her “circumstances” and her personal “skills”, “abilities”, “strengths”, and “weaknesses” to explain her current position.

Women prefer to understand that the problems of gender disadvantage have been resolved (Lewis, 2006; Maier, 1999; Scully, 2003) and draw upon an understanding of individualised consideration and meritocracy, which suggests that career success is available to all based on objective criteria of personal input and effort and women have access to the same opportunities as those open to men (Ahl, 2006; Marlow and Patton, 2002). Women perceived to highlight issues of gender, risk being interpreted by others as non-serious, non-entrepreneurial and illegitimate questioning their capability (Lewis, 2006), therefore, it is understandable that Helen denies gender, ‘keeping it out’ (Lewis, 2006) by drawing upon her personal circumstances through meritocracy and individualism. However, Lewis (2006: 453) argues that whilst this may appear “to be progressive, [it] conceals women’s continued disadvantage, neutralizing gendered experiences which privilege the masculine” through its continued invisibility (Lewis, 2006: 453). Consequently, Helen’s lack of identification with entrepreneurship, albeit perhaps non-reflexively (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010), reinforces gendered practices by continuing to draw upon strategies of meritocracy and individualism, keeping gender out (Lewis, 2006).

Helen suggests that if her behaviour “attaches the label entrepreneur well so be it”. Her thoughts shift from being unable to “relate” to ‘entrepreneur’ personally, to allowing others to label her if it “helps kind of slot you in to whichever...hole, box, criteria”. She shifts from resistance to the term ‘entrepreneur’, to accepting that other people will label her an ‘entrepreneur’.

Perhaps Helen's contradictory thoughts, highlight either at a reflexive or non-reflexive level, that should she align and identify her behaviour with entrepreneurship she would go against her socially perceived sex category and social perceived gender, undoing gender (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007) and jolt assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) of how she should behave as a feminine woman. Therefore, by highlighting her inability to "relate" to the term she is doing gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987) maintaining gender relations.

Natalie's response also moves from resisting the term 'entrepreneur' to a level of acceptance with the term. She rejects the term yet draws upon the same language she uses to describe an entrepreneur to describe herself:

Not really no I just 'em...I think I think I'm very good at spotting opportunities and then turning an opportunity to maybe generate money or turn an opportunity to create jobs or...or to deliver a service and I think that 'em...I think with being an entrepreneur it's maybe all about taking a chance and not being not being frightened if it's if it's going to fail 'em a lot of the times can be being in the right place at the right at the right time...but I don't really I don't really think think of myself as erm an entrepreneur I view I view the business very much of like as that is my job you know and it's it doesn't reflect into what...what what I do as a person if that makes sense

Natalie highlights her strengths of "spotting opportunities" to "generate money" and "create jobs", descriptions which she draws upon throughout the interview to describe entrepreneurship, before immediately contradicting herself by stating that she does not think of herself as an entrepreneur. She makes a clear a distinction between her business and her as a person suggesting that her business does not reflect what she does as a person. In viewing her role within the business as a job, she is able to de-personalises and detaches herself from the business. Natalie's comment is contradictory with understandings within the authentic leadership theory base which assert that "one acts in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings" (Hartner, 2002: 382) and transparently convey themselves to their followers (Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Sparrow, 2005; Gardner *et al.*, 2005). Perhaps Natalie manages her dual presence (Gherardi, 1994) by drawing upon a process of boundary keeping offered by Bruni *et al.*, (2004a) to preserve different symbolic spaces for different parts of her life. In drawing a distinction between her business life, which she describes using masculine descriptions, and herself as a person, with social role expectations placed on her to be a feminine woman (Eagly, 1987, Eagly *et al.*, 2000) she finds a place which is comfortable for her to work with the given (Mavin, 2009b) which does not permit more fluid feminist understandings of authenticity as a 'quest' (Levitt and Hiestand, 2004) or 'an going project' (Lewis, 2009).

Natalie later blurs her earlier masculine understanding of 'entrepreneur' with an understanding of her a feminine leadership approach which she describes as her 'caring side' as an entrepreneur, with the personal financial risk she has taken, comfortably equating her own actions and behaviours with entrepreneurship:

setting an example as well and being, being committed I mean there's erm...there's there's there's been times with the business that I've had to put like my m my own money in to sort of fund the business you know and that's been for staff wages to keep people in jobs. I mean and that's that's also a risk that I'm taking because we have had companies that's gone...either gone into liquidation or you know gone, gone gone bust and and that money that money's money's gone and I mean I could either...that's that's been sort of a saving for you know like a for a for a house or erm so I think there's like a caring side to probably entrepreneurs to to really care about the staff who are working for them to do what they can to keep them in keep them in work and I think that's why we've been probably successful in retaining business that we've got because we're you know we do care of the service that we give and also about the staff that we've got working for us

Natalie outlines the personal financial risk she takes in using her own savings "to fund the business" and pay "staff wages". She attributes this risk to her "commitment" to her employees and the "caring side" suggesting that entrepreneurs "really care about the staff". In this example, Natalie, describes her behaviour which she likens to entrepreneurial behaviour, contradicting her above assertion that entrepreneurship does not reflect what she does. In taking financial risks she conforms to masculine expectations of entrepreneurial leadership and undoes gender by going against the expectations of her socially perceived sex category (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007). However, her undoing of gender supports and enables her to achieve her communal aim of caring, and, therefore, doing gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987) as the purpose behind her action conforms to social role expectations of how women are expected to behave, highlighting the complexity of her lived experiences.

Natalie begins by discussing her caring motive by taking a personal financial risk at an individual level, indicated through her use of the first person. As she continues, there is a change in focus from a caring value that was personal, to a value that appears to be held by a collective, indicated by her use of the plural 'we': 'we've been probably successful' and 'we do care of the service that we give'.

This suggests that her personal caring value that she lives by within the business has transferred and become embedded through her “setting an example”. Natalie’s intention of “setting an example” by living out her own personal values within the business, enables her to embed her values within her employees.

The need to embed personal values within the business contradicts her earlier claim of personal detachment from the business, positioning it as a job which “doesn’t reflect [her] as a person”, however, she now attributes their success in retaining business to her personal value of caring.

Like Natalie, **Sandra** also likens her role with her business as a job:

I just view myself I suppose as this person who...I suppose has a job to do and I’ve and I do it that’s you know em...I was going to say probably whatever I do I’m put the same but then I don’t know would I put the same amount of thing in because if...if I was sitting ‘em worked for say statutory...body em or somewhere else maybe I might think oh well everything you know there’s the money there there’s thing you know so maybe I would like to have a different outlook I don’t know so maybe I might not take the lead

Sandra opens her response by suggesting her role is like a job, however, as her construction emerges she struggles with the ambiguity of her original assertion of her role as a job. She challenges her initial thoughts as to whether she would put that same amount of effort in if it was not her business. She closes by suggesting she would have a “different outlook” and may “not take the lead”. Sandra highlights the difficulty in capturing the women’s understandings of themselves as entrepreneur leaders in a way which is meaningful to them. .

Beverley was the only woman that said she viewed herself as an entrepreneur leader but as a result of the label been given to her externally:

Definitely yes...it comes partly from feedback that’s been reflected back to me within the last few years so when people say things ‘em like that was brave of and I think ooh I suppose maybe it was and when I read statistics that say that it’s unusual for a woman to be an entrepreneur...I saw a financial advisor recently who was talking about investment and attitude to risk and he said well you’re already...unusual because you’ve taken the risk of setting up a business and I thought oh yes I suppose I I am (laughs) so a lot of it does come from external places that people reflect things back to me em but I thought I’ve always seen myself as being in business and the business happens to be law.

Whilst Beverley agrees that she is an entrepreneur leader, she describes how her view has evolved from the feedback she has received from other people external to her business. When descriptions associated with entrepreneurship such as “risk”, “brave” and “investment” are relayed back to her by other people, who suggest this *is* what she does, she has the affirmation to believe that she is an entrepreneur leader.

Whilst Beverley’s response appears to open very confidently, her justification highlights her need for external approval, suggesting a lack in confidence, a description that is associated more with femininity. Therefore, in her description Beverley manages her dual presence by asserting that she conforms to masculine descriptions of entrepreneurship of “brave” and “risk” taking, satisfying entrepreneurial expectations and undoing gender by going against her socially perceived gender expectations (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007). However, she reveals that this is label ‘given’ to her externally rather than as a result of her confidence to assert this claim herself, her lack of confidence is aligned with femininity and conforms to her social role expectations as a feminine woman (Eagly, 1987, Eagly *et al.*, 2000).

The women entrepreneur leaders expressed less discomfort with the term ‘leader’ as they related their own experiences to their understandings of leadership. **Natalie** outlined commitment as a key aspect of successful leadership and then illustrated her own commitment in ‘sacrificing a holiday’ for the sake of the business. **Beverley** suggests that leaders ‘have to put a bright and breezy face’ which she personally relates to doing within her business to get through the “off days” which contradicts authentic leaderships understandings of the need for leader to transparently relate oneself inner thoughts and feelings with followers (Hartner, 2002; Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Sparrow, 2005). The women resisted labelling themselves a leader far less than they did in labelling themselves entrepreneurs, however, there was an indication that relating their behaviour and activities to the word leader did not feel entirely comfortable as **Helen** within her first interview apologises: “I think, sorry I am a leader”.

When asked about her natural leadership style, **Helen** uses a masculine war metaphor to convey her authority and power:

if it was an army I would be out there at front with fastest horse and the biggest flag kind of thing, follow me.

The war metaphor suggests that she leads from the front and charges ahead with her followers behind her believing in the direction which she is headed. The portrayal of a military leader creates an image of a formal hierarchy, with authority, power and order. This powerful masculine image highlights Helen's non-reflexive (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010) gender practice, reinforcing the gendered nature of entrepreneurial leadership and in doing so, undoing gender (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007) as her behaviour contradicts her social role expectation as a feminine woman (Eagly, 1987, Eagly *et al.*, 2000). This military image is in stark contrast to the image she constructs when dealing with a crisis:

I get involved and I get people to talk about things to me, to the other people are involved necessarily and work through a resolution

The forceful, powerful and active imagery constructed in Helens military analogy disappears in her approach to dealing with a crisis. She emphasizes the need for the involvement of others. Rather than Helen leading from the front and dictating *the* solution depicted in her first description, she discusses and negotiates options with the people involved, acknowledging followers' agency. This negotiation is highlighted as critical by Eagly (2005) within authentic leadership, but suggests it is difficult for women to do with followers because they lack leadership legitimacy (Eagly, 2005) as they embody difference. In this example, Helen feels able to talk and "work through a resolution" with her followers, however, she is aware of her need to "adjust" her approach dependent upon the circumstance and person she is dealing with:

the thing about being a leader is for me it means that you slightly adjust your approach depending on the situation and the person who you are dealing with. I don't think you can have a style that applies everybody across the board you've got to adjust it.

Helen's recognition for the need to "adjust" highlights the complexities of her experiences as she acknowledges that one size does not fit all, and requires shifts in her behaviour resulting in social flux of doing and undoing gender (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007). The need to "adjust" is also highlighted by **Sandra**. She initially describes herself as 'easy to get on with' but suggests she can be authoritative:

I think, I think, I'm quite easy going to get along, so I think I'm easy to get on with em. I wouldn't say I'm a dictator er, as a leadership right I'm not dictator. Em...I'm not authoritarian either...unless I have to be where things are different. I think I'm authoritative. Well hopefully I'm authoritative, as in you know I ask people to do things and explain why they have to be done and things, then if they're not that's probably when I would get er be an authoritarian, I suppose. Em as in...because then if if you ask and it's totally ignored or whatever then there's steps and ways that you have to take within work because there's structures within a workplace that you have to follow through so then yes, I would. But I think I'm em, the type of person that people can come to and approach and you know. And I think sometimes I'm a bit soft as well.

Sandra's response is contradictory. She begins by affirming her "easy going approach" by denying that she is a "dictator" or "authoritarian", before suggesting that she actually is "authoritative" when she has to be "where things are different", highlighting the contextual nature of her behaviour. Just as Sandra suggests that she is authoritative, she begins to question her perceived authority through "well hopefully I'm authoritative" and provides an example of where she would become more authoritative if she was being "totally ignored". She then becomes very formal, highlighting the "structures within a workplace" to support such approach, before returning to highlight her approachable nature and how she can be "a bit soft as well". Sandra's ambivalence within her description of her entrepreneurial leadership approach, jolts our assumptions and understandings within the given of the gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b). The lived experiences of women entrepreneur leaders highlight the complexities and tensions that they must deal with, as they are required to blur masculine and feminine, agentic and communal behaviours in the doing and undoing of gender. However, the ambiguity of their experiences in relation the given gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b) challenges assumptions by encouraging us to reflect upon the possibility for multiple understandings in order to make sense of their contradictory responses.

Despite the women entrepreneur leaders struggling to relate to the word 'entrepreneur' and readily accepting themselves as leaders, as the interviewing stages progressed, their understanding of entrepreneurship and leadership became intertwined. The women struggled to keep their references to leadership and entrepreneurship separate within their stories and examples, drawing parallels between the two understandings. For example as **Natalie** discusses her caring and femininity leadership value she specifically highlights that entrepreneurs can also be caring.

Sandra also highlights charisma as a significant element of a successful leader whilst also suggesting that “maybe this is the same for an entrepreneur” as employees will have the same “belief in what they are going to do”. However, as she develops her understanding she highlights a difference between the two:

leaders are different, they lead from the front. You can get people who lead from the back and you know, all different bits, but that's it. And I suppose in the same way the only difference being I don't think an entrepreneur would lead from the back because it's their idea and they think they want to be at the front for the for the time being and then go and then if you get famous yes. You get other people and then they and then you can lead from the back but all the time you're watching (both laugh) do you know what I mean? To make sure that they're doing what they're supposed to be doing because at the end of the the day it's your idea, your business your money you're just giving other people a chance for to do things.

Sandra opens by clearly outlining her distinction between leaders and entrepreneurs; leaders can lead from the front and the back, but believes that entrepreneurs would not lead from the back because “it's their idea”, therefore, they would want to be at the front until they become “famous”.

This highlights the media influence in constructing entrepreneurship, highlighting how the process of entrepreneurship has the ability to make people famous and become a celebrity entrepreneur (see the next section 6.4.2 for further examples). Sandra's thoughts on entrepreneurs leading shifts, as she suggests that “you can lead from the back” but perhaps because an entrepreneur has invested their idea and money they have a greater interest in “watching” you. She then suggests that the risks entrepreneurs take create opportunities for other people to develop and perhaps lead for themselves. Consequently, Sandra begins by separating leaders and entrepreneurs approaches to leadership, before contradicting herself and suggesting that both are able to lead from the front, “because at the end of the day it's your idea, your business your money you're just giving other people a chance for to do things”.

The 'double talk' and 'double speak' (Grandy and Mavin, 2010) within the women entrepreneur leaders' understandings of entrepreneurship and leadership highlight the intertwined nature of the processes and the struggles they experience when attempting to separate their understandings and further appreciate the complexities of their experiences of gender within entrepreneurial leadership. The women's voices highlight contradiction creating an opportunity to interpret the processes of entrepreneurship and leadership differently, allowing them to blur or overlap to construct and reconstruct their own understandings of entrepreneurial leadership.

6.4.2 Entrepreneur = Men and/or Celebrity Status

Susan without prompt, attributes her lack of identification with the label entrepreneur leader because of the association with the successful male entrepreneurs that she has met at networking events and popularised entrepreneurs such as Anita Roddick who have endured and overcome adversity:

I think you hear that word (entrepreneur) and I associate the people sort of like [well known regional male entrepreneur] and um the guys that I have met in the [a networking organisation] and Anita Roddick and all these people. Saying that when I listen to their stories what's really inspiring is these are people who know what it is like to really have to struggle, have to juggle and have come through that channel.

Susan's understanding of 'entrepreneur' is based upon experiences of 'struggle'. She readily identifies 'entrepreneur' to individuals who have endured great hardship and have still been able to succeed through such adversity. She associates the word to male regional role models and celebrity entrepreneurs such as Anita Roddick, highlighting the influence so called 'celebrity' entrepreneurs through their popularisation in the media. However, the extreme struggle that such individuals are said to have endured, are far removed from the women's everyday lived realities, therefore, there is a jolt in understanding between the word entrepreneur and the association with male and celebrity entrepreneur lives and their own everyday lives. An illustrative example is **Sandra's** outline of leaders that she highlighted as those that she respects enough to emulate. She highlights key historic figures:

well I I think about Ghandi because he's you know he he he did a lot for [...] peace and for you know all of that thing I think of er [...] Martin Luther King for what he did for people

Living up to the ideals of such enduring role models is an unrealistic and aspirational goal and does not reflect the realities of everyday entrepreneurs as **Natalie** describes below:

when you say entrepreneur it it I've always sort of in my head there's always been like Richard Branson type thing and things like that. I don't know I think entrepreneur is quite a flashy name for for being in business because it's it's very, an entrepreneur sounds quite a glamorous name I think and it's not glamorous at all it's bloody hard work. It erm and. I think that that with it the word entrepreneur just doesn't fit with me it er so I've never really classed myself with, as being an entrepreneur I suppose although other people would probably, probably see it, see it like that erm.

Natalie highlights her lack of identification with so-called 'celebrity' entrepreneurs such as Richard Branson who have been glamorised by the media which she refers to as "flashy", masking the "hard work" in running a business. The gap she identifies between her understanding of entrepreneurs and her own lived experiences results in her returning to her original assertion that she has "never really classed [herself] with, as being an entrepreneur". However, whilst it "doesn't fit with" her, Natalie recognises that others may perceive her differently and label her an entrepreneur.

Given Natalie's lack of identification with popularised understandings of 'entrepreneur', and her lack of resonance to her own lived experiences she outlines her difficulty in identifying with anyone who she respects enough to emulate in her own behaviour:

I can't think of anybody. I really can't think of anybody. I think erm qualities in people you've got erm....think it's more of a case of when you're working with people it's just...respecting the qualities that they have and working with them to the, to like the best of like your ability that you can. And bringing out the best in them and getting them to do...getting them to use them qualities to do the best the best jobs that they can for the business you know because er...And I think I haven't really got anybody that I look up to and think ooh I really I really respect what they do

Natalie's rejection of 'celebrity' entrepreneurs, or simply any one person specifically as a role model, leads her to construct her own ideal, drawing upon the different qualities of others. Perhaps drawing upon many people to construct their own ideals is more helpful and realistic to women entrepreneur leaders, to understanding and make sense of their experiences. She places emphasis on her need to work with others, to bring "out the best in them". This focus on the development of others could be interpreted as Natalie doing gender (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007) as her priority is to support others, however, she states that her reason is "for the business", consequently her response is ambivalent as she does gender in order to meet entrepreneurial leadership aims thereby undoing gender.

6.4.3 Awareness of Difference

When the women entrepreneur leaders were asked questions during the interviewing stages which made reference to gender, three of the women denied that it was an issue. When responding to the question 'what does being a woman in business mean to you?'

Helen stated:

I don't think of myself as a woman in business. My view though is just that I am a business person and there are indicators from outside the business that I am a woman and therefore things are slightly different. But I I don't see that. And it's just not my view of the world at all so for me that's a very hard question because I don't see it as such.

Helen consciously denies her gender, by not thinking of herself as a woman but rather a business person, before indicating her awareness of the perception of people external to her business that she is "woman and, therefore, things are slightly different". She then returns to deny that there is a difference, therefore, in her view it is a "very hard question" to respond to. Drawing on Lewis' (2006) work, by denying any perceived difference Helen attempts to neutralise her experience, to keep gender out.

Highlighting or playing on her womanhood as an issue could result in her being perceived to be bringing gender in which could affect her perceived credibility within the entrepreneurial leadership process. However, in reflexively denying that gender is an issue, she is non-reflexively reinforcing gendered practice (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010), thus creating a paradox. Whilst her intention may be progressive in encouraging others to recognise her as a complex person rather being defined by her sex, her denial of difference, reinforces the gender social order failing to challenge masculine hegemony (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004; Nencel, 2010).

Sandra does not deny her womanhood and is aware of how it has influenced others perceptions positively in her situation:

to me being a woman in business, I'm, I'm just, I'm a business person who is a woman and I I can do the job that I I'm doing and I like to do. If people are surprised by that whether they be male or female, great, 'em that's up to them. It's their opinion isn't it? But em it's strange I mean I know people say oh women are left behind and all this that and the other, but I suppose within the role where I am because it's childcare people expect women to be in this this thing.

Sandra clearly stresses that being a woman does not determine her ability “to do the job”; however, she is aware that other people may be surprised which she suggests is positive. She continues by commenting on how “strange” it is, as people expect that a woman should be in her role given her business location within the childcare sector. Childcare, located within the symbolic space of femininity and private space, is positioned as women’s work, therefore, as it transfers into the public sphere of waged labour the nature of the work is aligned with their social role expectations of feminine women resulting in social role congruity for women (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Sandra further comments that women are perceived to be “left behind” within entrepreneurship, but adds that because she is based in the childcare sector, it is acceptable and expected that women should run and lead such businesses as she does gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), highlighting her gender awareness, and that she does not perceive gender to be an issue for her, given her sector location as her business activities align with her socially perceived sex category (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). She further asserts that you “are still stereotyped by your sex within a job and whether you fit in or not is the sex first, long before the capability of doing the job”. Sandra notes the irony of this perception as within her role she has no direct childcare responsibility, her core part of what she does is to source and secure funding to ensure the business remains sustainable:

That's another thing as well isn't it. It's a woman's job to look after children never mind about the auditing the funding, finding funds, making it sustainable, having to em hire people fire people whatever (laughing) you're doing exactly the same as someone in a great big business

Sandra highlights that what she is doing within her business is no different than any other business, however, her sector location which is congruent with her social role expectations, increases her level of acceptance and perhaps reduces her level of visibility (Simpson and Lewis, 2005). **Natalie** also highlights her awareness of the advantage of being a woman when setting up her cleaning business, as she believed others believed her to be "more credible as a woman". This is the only point throughout the interviewing process that Natalie openly suggests that gender has been an issue for her, albeit to her advantage. Natalie consciously attempts to keep gender out (Lewis, 2006) of the experiences and stories she shares, yet perhaps less consciously; her gender is implicit throughout her experiences as she outlines her thoughts on being a woman entrepreneur leader in a construction business:

I don't really, I, it never really erm, like being a woman never really...crosses my mind I I think it's more other people are you know are, are more, not impressed but I think they think it's it's quite good you know. I mean but, I I don't really ever think of it like that I just think of it of running the business and trying to keep everyone in job in in and in jobs and to keep the business going. The gender issue never really comes into it. I think other people think, oh, you're a. Other people think, oh, it's a woman in business especially when there's like with being quite small as well there's like little dot me you know I'm sitting talking to maybe like ten ten ten guys on on a site that erm that it's possibly other people that I, but the gender side of it hasn't ever come into it

Natalie opens by denying that gender is an issue for her and not something that she consciously reflects upon, however, she is aware that others may acknowledge her difference, as positive by being "impressed". Natalie suggests that she simply sees her role as running the business to ensure others have jobs and "the gender issue never really comes into it". However, this is immediately contradicted as she recognises how others acknowledge her physical difference, specifically in relation to height, as her clients and employees are predominantly male, therefore, she is highly visible within the environment that she operates. Simpson and Lewis, (2005) highlight women entrepreneurs' visibility as a result of their reduced numbers and embodied difference which leave their actions, behaviours and decisions open to greater scrutiny.

However, whilst Natalie acknowledges her difference and visibility standing out on site as “little dot” talking to ten men, she maintains that this is the perspective of others and not a view shared by her, reiterating that gender “hasn’t ever come into it”.

As Lewis (2006) highlights, for Natalie to acknowledge gender would be dangerous for her acceptance with her followers, therefore, her conscious gender denial is perhaps one of her strategies to deal with her difference within a predominantly masculine environment. Natalie’s awareness of her visibility is also highlighted as she describes how she has a “mixture of business cards” with different job titles on and cards that are completely blank. She is very aware of her position as a young woman operating within the construction sector and how others can be “judgemental”, therefore, when meeting a client for the first time she refers to herself as an “account manager”. Natalie also uses her dress to secure her acceptance from “tradesmen” she employs.

when I’ve got like my suit and stuff on like, that if you look a bit stiff when tradesmen are coming in, they’re, the way they act with you changes a little bit when you’re. Erm. If I was to say oh this is my company they’d er you know they maybe wouldn’t like the fact that somebody young had their own company you know it’s get it has happened before where...it’s just easier and I find you get a bit more you get more response from the person by going in at that level

The gender practice Natalie engages with to suppress her visibility as a young woman entrepreneur leader through her dress highlights the non-reflexive practice she engages (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010). At a less conscious or unconscious level, Natalie has an aware of how others respond to her as a woman entrepreneur leader and, therefore, tempers the formality of her dress (Martin, 2003; 2006) when dealing with tradesmen to ensure that her business is accepted positively, rather than risk negative perceptions because of age and sex. She suggests that taking such an approach is “easier” as it elicits a better response. Natalie, therefore, does gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) and does not challenge the gender order (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) of how women should behave in accordance with their social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) by reducing the visibility of her position. However, within other contexts Natalie embraces her embodied difference highlighting the ‘double talk’ and ‘double speak’ (Grandy and Mavin, 2010) within her experiences.

6.4.4 Accepting and Embracing Difference

Whilst the women entrepreneur leaders in this study are aware and attempt to suppress their gender difference by doing gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), there are also occasions where they comfortably accept and embrace the advantages that their perceived difference brings. **Susan** outlines the advantages of not being treated the same:

I think you can't get away from the fact that, em as a woman, men perhaps aren't as aggressive with you. And that's a fact. And I don't know if we say, oh we want to be treated the same, and I don't know why we would want to be treated the same. I don't see it like a failing or whatever but it they do speak to you differently, but I never see it as a slur or em you know in a derogatory sense. But obviously they're more gentle and you're able to ask perhaps more direct questions without feeling that they think oh what a knob or whatever. I think not being anxious to ask anything I don't know if that's a woman, I think it probably is because men are perhaps more cautious. Always think there's, always another angle and would not want to be seen as not knowing, whereas I would ask anything because equally I would think well they don't know about [her other profession] or anything and would answer what anybody asks me there. So you know, so I would ask anything you know so that I would know and that I wouldn't feel that I ought to know or I feel ashamed I don't or anything I would say well I am not sure how would you do that why would you do that why do you think that so I have always been pretty open and receptive to um to things.

Susan opens by suggesting that men are not as aggressive with women. She builds her argument by questioning why men and women should ever be treated the same, and does not view difference as a 'failing'. She suggests that because of the lack of aggression men have towards women she feels able to ask direct questions. Susan suggests that men are less cautious of women than of other men, as she believes men perceive women to be less of a threat. With reduced expectations, she suggests that women are able to ask questions without feeling a need to impress or men feeling suspicious that there is "another angle", in a competitive sense, to the questions they ask. Susan, argues that taking advantage of men's view of her as a reduced threat, does not make her feel any less credible for "not knowing" something as she describes that she would not expect someone from outside of her employed profession to have the depth of knowledge that she does and would, therefore, expect that they ask questions. Her desire to ask questions about developing her business or areas she does not know about, is not something that she does or should feel "ashamed" about because it is part of her "open" nature.

Susan, therefore, plays gendered assumptions to her advantage in relation to her perceived reduced threat as a woman, to gain advice and support to successfully develop her business. This presents a paradox as in doing gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), by playing to gendered assumptions; she is able to engage in the undoing of gender as she the advice she receives enables her to develop and grow her business.

Beverley, highlights her awareness of difference and the advantages it enables:

I'm not wildly keen on it but the soft skills side of things, and not all women are the same, and I'm not saying all women have soft skills, not all men lack them. I accept that completely. But I think there are models of behaviour that operate in business and in law particularly, which as a woman, I don't adhere to or aspire to. Em, and I think that having empathy and good communication skills and good relationship building skills is a really big plus, em in developing successful client relationships so there are some clients that I've worked with for twelve fifteen years you know and they're very loyal where there is a good relationship and we don't cross boundaries we're not these are not em feminised sort of I'm not mothering anybody

Beverley opens by outlining her discomfort with the term “soft skills”, and not “being wildly keen on it”, acknowledging the lack of value. She quickly asserts that she does not sex role stereotype in her statement that “not all women have soft skills not all men lack them I accept that”, cautious not to essentialise men and women. Beverley moves to highlight that the dominant “models of behaviour” within the sector of law which she operates, are not those which she would “adhere to or aspire to” as a woman. She, therefore, moves from a conscious rejection of homogenous categorisation of women and men, to then reinforce gendered and essentialist categorisations of women, as she rejects the model of behaviour within the law sector on the grounds of being a ‘woman’. Beverley draws upon traditionally feminine and communal (Eagly and Carli, 2007) descriptions of “empathy”, “good communication skills” and “good relationship building skills” as a “big plus” in developing loyalty with her clients, as she engages in doing gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). However, she emphasizes that whilst she develops good relationships, she is still able to maintain “professional boundaries”. She highlights her resistance to her feminine behaviour being labelled as “mothering”, further rejecting homogenous categorisation.

It's perfectly permissible to respect professional boundaries and allow yourself to be that human. And I think that being female makes it easier to break down those barriers. I can see that being a male lawyer in the pinstriped suit putting on that front he's going to want to maintain that front maintain that image, whereas, I

suspect I shouldn't talk for, on behalf of others. For myself I know that I break those barriers down and I just let the client see the see the real me.

Beverley highlights the possibility of doing gender in line with her social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) whilst also maintaining professional boundaries. She suggests that her embodied difference “makes it easier” for her as a woman because she cannot be a “male lawyer in the pin-striped suit”, therefore, as she highlights throughout her interviews that having her own business has provided her with a “blank piece of paper” to break free from traditional “models of behaviour” and perhaps destabilising the social order by simultaneously doing gender well and doing gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Beverley embraces her difference from her male competitors and positions this as an advantage in presenting herself as ‘real’, or perhaps authentic or integrous to her employees or clients. The social role congruence of a woman behaving in a communal or feminine way would elicit perceptions of credibility amongst followers as she conforming to her social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000).

Beverley highlights her resistance to being perceived to be “mothering”, whilst Sandra and Helen draw upon and embrace their experiences as mothers to develop their skills in a way which is appropriate for their business. **Sandra** states:

Well I I suppose just em. Sounds really silly this I suppose, em coming in and and looking at things from a business level you know you come in and you've never run a business. You've never done things, then you're looking at things and you think right this is like running your family. But on a different level you know there's budgets for different things. There's you know like, you, you, know you have to pay your mortgage, your insurance, everything. It's the same in here. You have to pay your rents, you have to pay your insurance so that was like you think, right, you know how to do that you've got all of that.

Sandra draws upon her organisational skills within her family life to apply within the business context. She opens by suggesting that perhaps it is “silly” to draw parallels between her family life and her business, indicating how doing so is perhaps devalued or not legitimate. However, for Sandra, drawing upon her experiences, she embraces her domestic and private role to support her within the entrepreneurial leadership processes within the public sphere.

Helen also draws upon her role as a mother to support managing her people:

I do recognise there are some skills I bring to the business as a woman. Not least, what we have just been talking about, which is the management of people. There are many more skills that you acquire as a mother and dealing with your offspring and their friends and the tussles that go on so, so those advantages that come from being a woman I recognise.

Helen recognises the advantages she brings to the business as a 'woman', as well as the skills she has developed as a 'mother' dealing with her children and friends to support the management of her followers. Helen's categorisation of women's skills and additional skills drawn from motherhood highlights her gendered assumptions. Whilst it highlights such skills as important within the entrepreneurial leadership context, she reinforces the social order in (Nencel, 2010) in failing to challenge the homogenous categorisation. Helen highlights through a further example that "indicators from outside" suggest that being a woman means that "things are slightly different", drawing upon the advantages and highlighting a negative:

Some of them are very obvious you can get funding because you are a woman in business, and if you are woman in an IT business you can get , on funding so other people have identified that you're in an area that's not quite, so the norm as some others. There is, 'em so, so and that that's through very clearly, I now, I get kind of targeted with, 'we've got some money for a woman in charge of a business doing IT we need to talk to you'...em funny enough also there's a flipside of that coin is that if I'm trying to arrange meetings with senior managers of local authorities, because we certainly deal with education as you know. In [client organisation] there is almost the hint of a suggestion when I first call that I am calling on behalf of a male, you know. I'm the PA come secretary come take the initial conversation on the phone and then move it up to who it belongs to, so, I get that kind of feedback as well which is obviously related to the fact that they are speaking to a female. Those are the kind of indicators I mean.

Helen recognises the financial benefits of being a woman entrepreneur leader in a male dominated sector such as IT. Being labelled as "not quite" the norm, results in her being able to access "funding on funding" and being "targeted" by some who have "money for a woman in charge of a business doing IT", emphasising her uniqueness as people are desperate to talk to her. Helen's example highlights current approaches to supporting women entrepreneurs, particularly those located within traditionally male dominated industries by specifically targeting them with funding, creating a paradox as women are positioned as the problem and the solution to entrepreneurship with the UK is, confirmed through their practice. However, whilst she embraces a discourse of difference (Lewis, 2009) through financial benefits, she also notes the "flipside of that coin".

She describes when calling clients, the assumption is made that she is someone's secretary, highlighting, the widely held belief that women could or should not be entrepreneur leaders is still prevalent. Whilst women embrace the advantages of the differences, they do so both reflexively and non-reflexively to support the success of their business. However, through both the positive and negative experiences provide the indicators that Helen describes that she is not the norm.

The section that follows discusses how women entrepreneurs in the study respond to their perceived difference.

6.4.5 Responding to Difference

Following on from themes of awareness of difference, accepting and embracing difference, the women entrepreneur leaders' category of experience; responding to difference highlight their thoughts and behaviours. **Helen** outlines her experiences of walking into a meeting and sensing how others perceive and label her:

I don't walk into a room as a woman, or as an entrepreneur, or a leader. I just walk into a room. How people respond to you tends to give you a hint as to what they see you as. There may be times when you recognise you are going to have to be slightly more direct in your approach because some people are looking for a bit of weakness you know. Maybe she just doesn't know her dobules from a USB type situation and you just have to make clear that you do, but that's something that they have projected on to me. I mean, I don't carry around a label saying I am female, therefore, I am slightly illiterate. I'm as literate as I need to be, therefore, if I don't know the answer I will damn well know somebody who does (laughs). So you're not going to frighten me no matter what you ask. So I don't know if it's a question of I just don't let it or I just haven't recognised it. But I think because I myself don't see it as an issue.

Helen opens by stating that she does not walk into a meeting by taking a role but suggests that it is clear from others reactions to her of how they label her. She suggests that people are sometimes looking for a 'weakness' requiring her to be slightly 'more direct' in her approach. She, therefore, highlights her awareness in identifying the need to undo gender (Deutsch, 2007) by being more direct, drawing upon masculine, agentic behaviours in order to alleviate any perceptions of "weakness" as a result of the social role expectations to be a feminine woman (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000), and the ineffectual label attached to femininities within the leadership domain (Mavin, 2009b).

Helen deals with this by making her specialist knowledge clear through her behaviour, but highlights that her need to do this is a result of interpretations “projected on to”. She does not “carry round a label saying I am a female, therefore, I am slightly illiterate”, indicating that the interpretations are not something she carries the burden of, but is aware of and able to respond to. She states that such interpretations do not “frighten” her, suggesting some level of intimidation within the perceptions which challenge her position.

After recognising and acknowledging others perceptions of her as different as a result of her sex, Helen then immediately contradicts herself to state that “I just don’t let it or I just haven’t recognised it” because she does not see it as an issue. There is also ‘double talk’ and ‘double speak’ in Helen’s voice as she moves from recognising and responding to interpretations to deny it is an issue for her to contend with.

Beverley also shares the difficulties she experiences:

Being female means I have to make more of an effort to get the external recognition that I would like to have for the success of the business or success of me as an individual lawyer...still feel as if it's difficult to be taken seriously

Beverley’s highlights her active role in building her reputation, and the need to prove herself through her work hard to gain recognition for her success as a woman. She feels she needs to “blow [her] own trumpet” more than her male equivalent to be acknowledged for her work. This is illustrated through her active example of identifying the need to “pull people along” with her to convince them of her ability and build confidence in her:

you have to pull people along behind you in my area. I would say that’s the single most important thing. I have to bring the clients with me. I have to give them confidence in what I do and generate the confidence in them that they’re being well looked after and that they can recommend me. And that goes out in circles you know, to expand my client base and my reputation internally. I’m. I have struggled with this at times.

The need to build confidence in her abilities highlights her position as the ‘other’ as confidence in her is not assumed. The importance of recommendation is, therefore, crucial in securing business as Beverley emphasizes the need to be ‘tried and tested’ to develop her reputation. She develops this from an external client based perspective to an employee perspective stating that “internally em I’m, I have struggled with this at times”.

Consequently, she must build her reputation and confidence in her with her employees as well as external clients.

6.4.6 Involvement

Eagly (2005) asserts that authentic leadership requires leaders to negotiate and persuade with their followers, but suggests that women struggle to engage with such processes because they lack 'leadership legitimacy'. When the women entrepreneur leaders were asked about how they persuaded or negotiated their employees to follow them, **Natalie** stated that she certainly negotiated with people on site which she cited as mainly being in relation to financial terms with the remainder of topics "discussed openly", involving "humour".

Helen suggested that negotiation and persuasion with her employees was part of her everyday activities

I mean you do that everyday. Every time you open your mouth. Well at least I do that everyday. Um for me it's very important that people feel included, so it will be each individual per their specific role and then it will be whatever the team is so now we've a management team and a sales team so um I want them to be um not only members of but owners.

Helen recognises and accepts that persuasion and negotiation are part of her everyday lived experiences. She, therefore, places great importance upon inclusion to ensure and maintain employee motivation. She draws upon a strategy of inclusion and involvement, allowing employees to have the autonomy over their responsibilities providing them with ownership of their role. Helen's strategy of persuasion and negotiation links with Gupta *et al.*'s., (2004) conceptualisation of entrepreneurial leadership which they identify a challenge of cast enactment, understood to be how entrepreneur-leaders convince others to provide the resources to fulfil the goals. Gupta *et al.*, (2004) contend that the challenge in cast enactment is in gaining commitment.

Helen's need to involve others is illustrated within her research diary data:

I selected three staff who would be my first choice to develop into a management team. It was interesting to see the three staff react to being addressed as the 'management team'. I had to make a conscious effort not to respond to all queries and wait to hear their replies

In order to gain follower commitment she consciously takes a step back from responding to queries to provide them with the space to voice their views enabling her followers to see her commitment to them as a new 'management team'.

Beverley denies that she consciously persuades or negotiates her employees but rather believes she creates a positive and inclusive environment in use of 'black humour' and activities outside of office for example closing the office for the day to do an outdoor activity as a team. By adopting such strategies she asserts that 'it all feels like we're part of the same experience really'.

Sandra highlights in her research diary data her involvement through her commitment to her staff when one of her team leaders does not turn up for work:

Cancelled everything I had to do this afternoon and went to work in the club myself. I can't let parents and other staff down.

Susan also highlights the value she perceives from adopting an approach of involvement:

I think again everybody has got something to offer haven't they? So again it's looking and listening, but ultimately, yes, I would make the final decision because it's my business. And I have invested, so I couldn't just say yes we'll do that if it didn't feel right to me. So again if it wasn't something that I wanted to sort of move forward or pursue or do I would say, well perhaps we can think about it later, or whatever, but at the minute I feel more comfortable sort of doing it the way we are doing it.

Susan tempers her understanding of involvement in her understanding of the need for it to gain the commitment required within entrepreneurial leadership as outlined by Gupta *et al.*, (2004) against her having the final decision as a consequence of the money she has invested. Whilst Susan can be communal through her open and inclusive approach, when the occasion arises to be concerned for self she is able to do so. However, from her research diary data her inclusive approach provides her with the support to keep her going:

Feel tired at the minute realised I've not had a day off for months; plus working as nurse on evenings. Don't usually feel tired but do at the minute so appreciative of [employees name] ongoing ideas and support

Really appreciative of the staff working here at [company name] – they are so willing and supportive. It seems to be a happy environment that we are working in.

6.4.7. Values: My One Steady Rock

Values are at the heart of all of the women entrepreneur leaders' decisions and behaviours, **Helen** suggests "they aren't simply something you pick up on a morning and put on". The importance of values is outlined by Shamir and Eilam (2005) within the authentic leadership, described as those who have a level of self-knowledge reflects clarity about their values.

One value was common across all of women entrepreneur leaders' voices, the value of integrity. **Beverley** articulated the importance of integrity to her and her business:

We may not be perfect, and we may make mistakes, but we, if anybody ever challenged our integrity, I would be most het up about that...adhering to the values is the one steady rock you know that keeps us going.

Whilst she acknowledges that she and her business may not get everything right, she places great emphasis upon her value of integrity: the consistency between words and actions (Palanski and Yammarino, 2007). Beverley refers to "our integrity" indicating that integrity is a value which is shared within her business, including her followers. She further states that any challenge to their integrity would frustrate her as "values is the one steady rock" that "keeps us going", highlighting again that integrity is a value shared by her followers. Gardner *et al* (2009: 472) highlight that there is "a close relationship between the constructs of perceived authenticity and integrity", in that both have a positive influence upon on follower trust, consequently the shared value of integrity that Beverley refers to may support the development of trust and confidence with her followers which she suggests that she "struggles with" earlier in the category of *responding to difference* (see section 6.4.5).

Helen also highlights how her values guide and serve her:

There are lots of flippant answers aren't there (laughs) by live in the pursuit of happiness. I mean it isn't a million miles away to be honest...um integrity is very important to me.....which encompasses, but I would state things like being trustworthy being honestbeing reliable....I have to take strength from what I think is right because that is the only way I know how to do it

Helen suggests that others may perceive her values to be "flippant" but they are meaningful to her. She highlights integrity as being important to her, with her understanding outlined as being "trustworthy" and "honest".

Her integrity is her only sense of what is right providing her with an internal compass (Avoilo and Gardner, 2005) to “take strength from” and guide her decisions and behaviour.

Sandra’s builds upon Helen’s assertion that her values guide her decisions and behaviour, highlighting that differences in her decisions and behaviour, do not indicate that she is not being herself:

I could be standing up in front of ‘em a hundred, two hundred people with my jacket and my high heels as she says (laughs). You know stand there and being very professional and doing everything. And that would be me. But that’s, I would come across as being me...and that’s what I would do. Or when I’m in the office by myself, even if you’ve kicked your shoes off doing your work you’re still doing it and being professional and doing what you are because that’s you. No matter which part of me you get, you always get me...not something, I don’t pretend to be something else in a different thing which seems funny doesn’t it but because I just thought well that’s me. I can’t be a me that goes to work and a me that stays at home.

Sandra highlights the contextual dependence of her decision and behaviour but emphasizes that “no matter which part of me you get, suggesting the she remains to her values but they are enacted differently according to the situation. She outlines an example of her difference in appearance between making a speech to one to two hundred people in her “jacket and my high heels” to when she is in the office alone and she’s “kicked [her] shoes off”, she remains professional and doing what is true to her. Sandra highlights that she cannot separate or compartmentalise her life into a “me that goes to work and a me that stays at home”. She lives by her values and remains true to them, although, her difference in appearance and behaviour may be ambivalent, understanding through authentic leadership framework’s focus upon values enables new understandings of what may appear to be ambiguous claims and behaviour, to support multiple interpretations that may begin to challenge the gender dualism (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004; Mavin and Grandy, 2010). As Ladkin and Taylor (2010) highlight the leaders internal sense of self may not always be apparent, interpreted or observed in the same way that the women entrepreneur leader intended, which is highlighted in the next theme of experience for women entrepreneurs, embedding values.

6.4.8 Embedding Values

The importance of values highlighted above, is built upon within this category to outline how values have become embedded with the women entrepreneur leaders businesses.

The importance integrity through trustworthiness and honesty and how this value is lived out is illustrated by **Natalie**. She describes her discomfort with how an employee had handled sourcing a cheaper quote from a new supplier without offering their existing supplier the opportunity to better their quote:

One of the contractors we used, erm, and there was a big argument about it...coz one of the contractors that we've used for quite a while now...[an employee] had gone elsewhere to get a to get a price without me knowing, and he put the work to this other new company and he hadn't let this other guy know. Well that now has, has put a put a system in place where I've said whenever we're getting jobs whenever we're pricing up if we've got a relationship with somebody give them the opportunity to say look, you know. Don't just, just say oh we haven't got the job which is what he done which I don't like doing business like that. I think it's best to be, to be honest with people....I mean I've had it done with me, with companies going bust you know. People ringing us up over a weekend to come in and do work on a Saturday and Sunday knowing that the company's going to go bust and going bust on a Monday so I know, I know, and I also know what it feels like when you're pricing for jobs and people say that to you. And I think it's best to be honest with people.

Natalie describes how her values have developed from her own business experiences with customers, and how she would like to be treated. She reacts strongly to her employee not consulting with their existing supplier indicated by her description of a "big argument", as she perceives this behaviour to go against the honesty she has built within her client and supplier relationships, and compromised her values. Natalie's reaction to her employee's action indicates the importance placed upon her value of integrity, that whilst her employee may have saved her business money, a positive outcome does not justify the process by which he contravened the values meaningful to her to achieve a positive outcome. As a result of this incident, Natalie decided to "put a system in place" to ensure her values are protected and adhered to by her followers, formalising her values into a procedure. By implementing such a system, Natalie can ensure her business remains true to her values of integrity, honesty and trustworthiness, illustrating how women entrepreneur leaders are able to embed their values within the business and ultimately through their followers.

This progresses extant understandings of authentic leadership as leader – follower development offered by Gardner *et al* (2005) does not explore how leaders develop followers at a practical level. Positive modelling is not explored in terms of *how* this occurs, and assumes it occurs through osmosis through follower perceptions of their leaders (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010).

Embedding values through procedures is also drawn upon by **Beverley** as she uses a values based format to recruit her assistant:

I hired my assistant using criteria that were searching for those sort of results, so I had a very experienced lawyer who I interviewed who failed on a question that was a disguised way of exploring her integrity. She didn't know how she'd failed on that question, but she did and I as soon as it became apparent that she wasn't going to get a 100% mark for the integrity question that was it I didn't care about her experience or how many how many cases she had done so yes it's absolutely embedded with all of this.

A values based approach resulted in Beverley rejecting a very experienced solicitor and hiring a very inexperienced solicitor, emphasizing the importance she places on the value of integrity. As soon as it “became apparent” that the experienced solicitor did not score highly on integrity, her experience became irrelevant because her values were her priority. Beverley, therefore, embeds her values within the recruitment and selection process to ensure that her employees live by the same values. Remaining true to her values is extremely important to the women entrepreneur leaders, which is demonstrated through Beverley's example of building client relationships.

Beverley was offered work which would have been financially lucrative earning her “a great big nice fat fee”. However, she knew she was probably not the best person for the type of work offered and at this point she suggests she “taps into integrity”. She explained this to her client and suggested that they approach other companies. Remaining true to her values made her feel good:

I felt good about knocking that piece of work back and saying to them try something else.

It gave Beverley a sense of being on the right path as it enhanced her credibility with her client and compounding their trust in her as she was not “prepared to take the money run”.

The end result was also favourable as the client ended up returning to her, certain that they wanted her to deliver the work and it came back 'bigger and more expensive'.

The trust from her client as part of her integrity is the most important aspect for her, something which she will not compromise on.

Helen describes a tender application she made, faced with two choices; one to answer it in the way the authority required or in a way that was most appropriate to her company. She decided to answer the tender in a way most appropriate to the company. As a result her company was placed as the third option by the authority but her clients contacted her and said they liked the different approach she had taken and she gained a lot of business as a result. Helen commented on remaining true to her values:

I do think sometimes you don't know how staunch your beliefs are until you seriously try and test it. Before, so far the majority of the times I've had to make decisions, being true to my values has been a relatively straight forward decision. Having said that it does get in the way of being popular and it does get in the way of success in inverted commas.

In Helen's above extract remaining true to her values is critical and tested proven. She asserts that once you are aware of your values and abide by them, decisions become easier to make. However, she then contradicts this assertion by highlighting that all decisions aligned with your values do not always make you popular and certainly through the tender example described above, potentially "get in the way of success", emphasizing the struggle in followers translations and understandings of her values. Helen outlines how she attempts to embed her values through leading by example to increase followers awareness:

I lead, I intend to lead by example um I'm very much...involve people rather than than lead by statement or goal or direction. lead by um encourage people to understand what's going on possibly make their own judgement about the best way of getting to where we are aiming for. Encouraging them to use their strengths to get there, recognise that I have strengths and I have weaknesses. And that that's not necessarily a bad thing you just play to your strengths and not your weaknesses or have somebody else who covers the weaknesses. So I think I probably spend a lot of time leading because it's by actions and by words and by encouraging other people. And I take, I take a certain degree of um recognition of myself that I have to spend time confirming that my style actually sits well with people coming into the office.

Helen places great emphasis on leading by example to increase follower understandings of her decisions and behaviour, to enable them to make their own judgements. She illustrates her self-awareness in recognising her strengths and weaknesses, which she also highlights to her followers, a central principle of authentic leadership (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Yammarino *et al.*, 2008; Ladkin and Taylor, 2010).

Helen also conveys her need to live out her values through “actions and by words” to encourage her followers. This aligns with her key value of integrity which relates to the need for congruence between words and action (Meyer *et al.*, 1995). She also highlights the time she takes to consider how her style fits with her followers, indicating her awareness of the need to adjust her style.

6.5 Experiences of Gender within Entrepreneurial Leadership: Complexities and Tensions

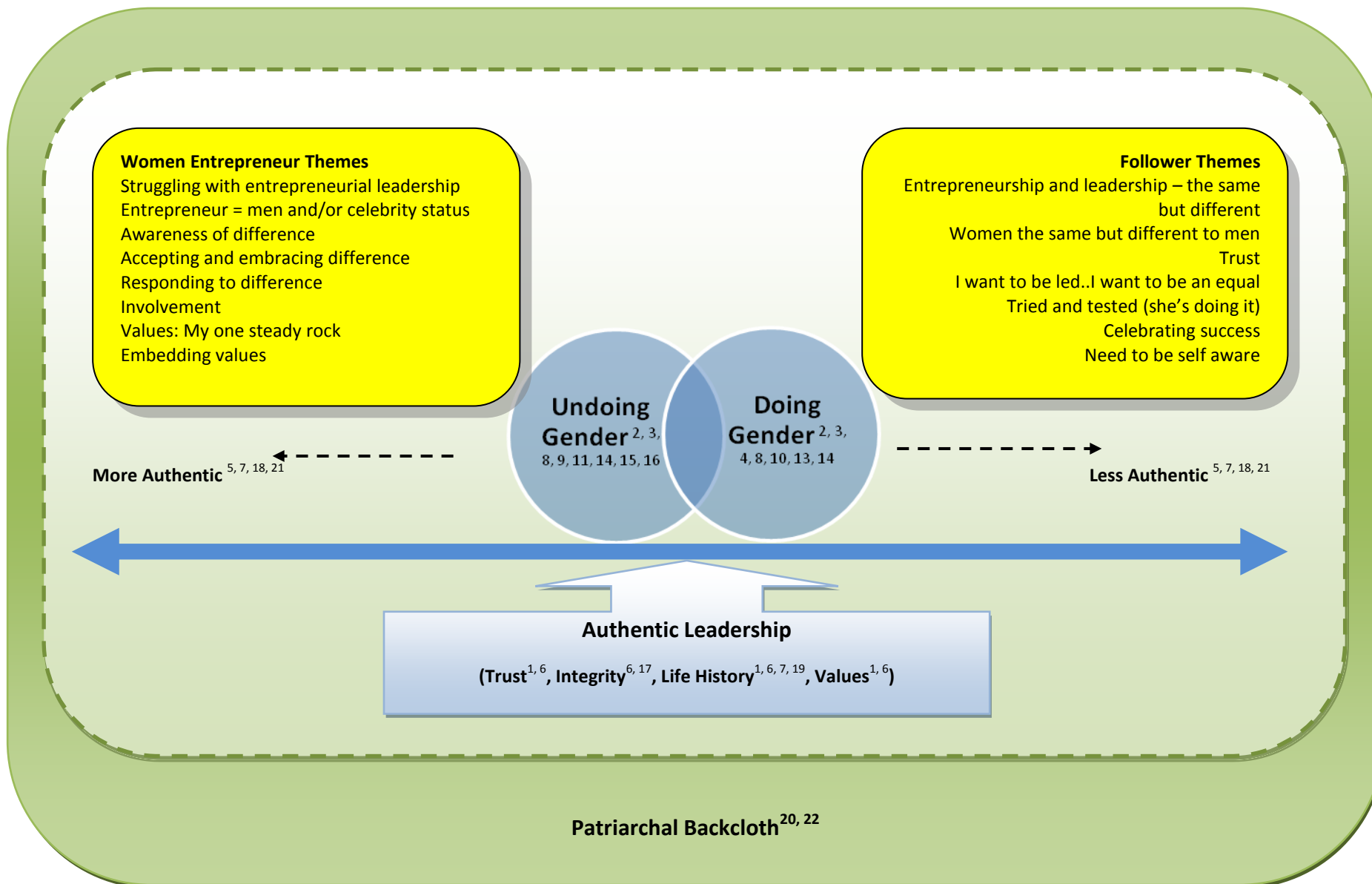
The richness and complexities of the women entrepreneurs’ and followers’ experiences of gender within entrepreneurial leadership cannot be captured within the gender dualism. Drawn from themes of experiences synthesised against the theory bases of gender, women in leadership, female entrepreneurship and authentic leadership the theoretical framework (see below Figure 6.5) is offered to provide further understandings of gender within a process of entrepreneurial leadership which challenges both gender and authentic binaries.

Given the understanding of patriarchy which provides the backcloth (Bryans and Mavin, 2003) to this research and the foundation layer to this framework, social role theory places expectations on women to be feminine and men to be masculine (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) resulting in the construction of a gender binary and maintenance of gendered understandings. Given masculine constructions of leadership (Eagly and Carli, 2003, 2007, 2008; Due Billing and Alvesson, 2000; Bryans and Mavin, 2003; Elliott and Stead, 2008) and entrepreneurship (Mirchandani, 1999; Ahl, 2006; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a,b; Lewis, 2006, 2009; Marlow *et al.*, 2009; Shaw *et al.*, 2009), and social expectations placed on women to be feminine (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000), women entrepreneurs negotiate gender (Levitt and Hiestand, 2004) through the doing and undoing of gender in relation to contextual sensitivity (Levitt Hiestand, 2004; George *et al.*, 2007; Roberts *et al.*, 2009; Tracy and Trethewey, 2005).

The framework offers an understanding of gender which allows the doing and undoing of gender to blur, enabling the co-existence of contradictory behaviours and challenging the established gender order as simultaneous and multiple enactments of masculinities and femininities (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) are experienced within entrepreneurial leadership.

This conveys the complexities of how gender is “accomplished in everyday interaction” (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 125). Experiences of gender flux are further supported through an understanding of authentic leadership as a continuum (Erickson, 1995), and variable state (Roberts *et al.*, 2009; George *et al.*, 2007).

Avolio *et al.*, (2004) argue that authentic leadership is the root that informs all other forms of leadership. Understanding authenticity within a process of leadership is informed by values (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Gardner *et al.*, 2005), integrity (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Palanski and Yammarino, 2009), trust (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Gardner *et al.*, 2005) and life history (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Shamir and Eilam, 2005; Avolio *et al.*, 2004; George *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, understanding authentic leadership as a continuum (Erickson, 1995) and variable state (Roberts *et al.*, 2009; George *et al.*, 2007) of being more or less authentic, is dependent upon trust, integrity, life history, values and contextual sensitivity. The framework offers understandings of how both gender and authentic leadership are variable and fluid, challenging extant binary understandings and enabling fluctuations and change (Tracy and Trethewey, 2005) across a continuum of being more or less authentic (Erickson, 1995) and doing and undoing gender .



Avolio *et al.*, (2004)¹; Bruni *et al.*, (2004a)²; Eagly and Carli (2007)³; Eagly and Karau (2002)⁴; Erickson (1995)⁵; Gardner *et al.*, (2005)⁶; George *et al.*, (2007)⁷; Gherardi (1994)⁸; Grandy and Mavin (2010)⁹; Kelan (2008¹⁰, 2010¹¹); Levit and Hiestand (2004)¹²; Lewis (2006¹³, 2009¹⁴); Martin (2006)¹⁵; Nencel (2010)¹⁶; Palanski and Yammarino (2009)¹⁷; Roberts *et al.*, (2009)¹⁸; Shamir and Eilam (2005)¹⁹; Simpson and Lewis (2005)²⁰; Tracy and Trethewey (2005)²¹; Walby (1989)²²

Figure 6.5 Thesis Framework

Drawing upon Levitt and Hiestand (2004) this provides an understanding that gender is negotiated, and changes dependent upon context and an individual's physical, emotional and social comfort. This theoretical framework incorporating authentic leadership and a gender lens challenges the assumption within authentic leadership literature that leaders self reference is automatically communicated to followers (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). It brings into focus followers' individual agency in their gendered interpretations of their women entrepreneurs.

Across both the women's and followers' voices 'double talk' and 'double speak' (Grandy and Mavin, 2010) emerges e.g. *I want to be led...I want to be an equal, Women: the same but different to men*, highlighting the struggles (understood to be ambiguities, ambivalence and contradictions) that individuals experience when (re)constructing their experiences as their strive for order and balance against a backcloth of patriarchy which works with the given gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b). Highlighting the complexities within and across participants 'double talk' or 'double speak' (Grandy and Mavin, 2010) is a useful to understand how ambivalence, contradiction and ambiguity are manifested through participants accounts of their experiences.

Chapter Seven surfaces gender complexities and tensions (Hearn, 1998) through a process of blending, some discourses identified as shaping women's experiences and followers perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership which ar. Exploring gender complexities through contradictions as discourse blend enabled "may signal discursal instability and hence act as pointers to struggle and avenues of social change (Pecheux, 1982), perhaps playing a 'disturbing' role themselves" (Sunderland, 2004: 13).

6.6 Chapter Summary

The primary data collected within this study was re-presented in this chapter, initially outlining themes of follower perceptions of women within the entrepreneurial leadership process, before the voices of the women entrepreneur leaders are re-presented through their themes of entrepreneurial leadership experiences. Themes of perception and experiences highlight the emergence of complexities and tensions within and across follower and women entrepreneur leaders' voices.

The next chapter draws upon the themes of experiences identified from both followers and the women entrepreneur leaders within this chapter, to offer discourses which surface the complexities and tensions within entrepreneurial leadership context from a gender perspective.

Chapter Seven

Highlighting Complexities

7.1 Introduction

This chapter draws upon themes of women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of gender within entrepreneurial leadership outlined in Chapter Six, to highlight how women entrepreneurs and followers engage with discourses which shape perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership for women, analysed through understandings of gender and authentic leadership. The chapter contributes to the research objective to; *'To identify how women entrepreneurs and followers engage with discourses and interpret how these discourses shape entrepreneurial leadership experiences from a gender perspective'*.

Firstly, the chapter outlines the understanding of discourse within this thesis, followed by a discussion of discourses of *visibility, integrity, acceptance, resistance* and *authenticity* before outlining a process of *blending*. A process of *blending* is then outlined as a way of understanding how *some* discourses are drawn together before offering a theoretical framework of entrepreneurial leadership.

7.2 Understanding Discourse

This section provides an outline of how discourse is understood to shape entrepreneurial leadership within this thesis, before further discussing my authorial strategy to re-orientate the reader with how discourses were identified from the emerging themes (re)presented in Chapter Six.

7.2.1 Understanding How Discourses Shape Entrepreneurial Leadership

In order to support how discourses are theorised, the understanding of discourse within this thesis, (also discussed in Chapter Five), is reiterated. Discourse within this study is understood to constitute the social world through the categorisation of phenomenon, to make sense of people's lived experiences (Hardy and Phillips, 2004).

In this study, discourses are understood to construct "social arena[s], in which common understandings [of gender social role expectations] are manifest in language, social practices and structures" (Fletcher 1999: 143). They shape "the conditions of possibility that determine" (Hardy and Phillips, 2004: 301) effective entrepreneurial leadership and authenticity perceived through a socially perceived woman's body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), thus creating truth effects (Kelan, 2008).

It is important to understand the fluid and contextually sensitive nature of discourse as "we are aware, (though we may not articulate it like this), of drawing on discourses at different times and different situations" (Sunderland, 2007: 2009). Discourses weave through contexts, shaping women entrepreneur leaders' and followers' experiences to different extents at different points in time. Consequently, this thesis understands that individuals may draw upon a number of discourses at the same time, referred to as 'inter-discursivity' (Sunderland, 2007), or, similarly resist them, recognising individuals' agency.

Resistance creates 'discursive space' enabling the emergence of alternate discourses, referred to as discursive contradictions (Sunderland, 2007). Creating such discursive space, dominant discourses can be displaced for sufficient time "to create, at least theoretically, a place where new things can be said and new social structures envisioned" (Fletcher, 1999: 24; Weedon, 1997). The purpose is not to usurp one truth claim for another, but to build tensions to facilitate discussions which challenge the given gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b), allowing new thinking to emerge (Fletcher 1999).

Taking a FSR approach within this thesis, produces a discursive space, which creates possibilities for dominant discourses to be challenged, contradicted (Sunderland, 2007) or reversed (Weedon, 1997). Whilst, there will be contexts where individuals will intentionally draw upon discourses, acknowledging their agency (Sunderland, 2007), there will also be contexts in which discourses will shape individuals non-reflexive experiences or perceptions (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010).

Understanding that discourses shape non-reflexive practise (Martin, 2006, Nencel, 2010), enables an understanding of how we “have come to develop deeply entrenched habits of thought which unnecessarily circumscribed the possibilities for action” (Chia, 2000: 517) within the process of entrepreneurial leadership.

Understanding how discourses shape thinking, attitudes and behaviour (Simpson and Lewis, 2007) within the entrepreneurial leadership process and the small firm context is important in understanding how gender is experienced. Process is understood to be “emergent patterning of relationships and interactions” (Chia, 1995: 588), highlighting intrinsic “struggles and contestations” (Chia 1995: 595). A key understanding of processes is that they are of “reciprocal influence, having emergent qualities which cannot be reduced to the independent contributions either of people or of contexts” (Hosking and Morley: 1991:63), therefore, within the context of entrepreneurial leadership, they cannot be reduced to leaders or followers independently.

As highlighted within Chapters Two, Three and Four, there is a lack of conceptual and empirical work which fuses the concepts of gender, authentic leadership and entrepreneurship from a social and cultural perspective. Fusing three literature areas; entrepreneurship, authentic leadership and gender, explored from a feminist perspective creates a ‘discursive space’ to offer alternate perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership as a process.

7.2.2 Authorial Strategy: Developing Discourses from Women Entrepreneur’s and Followers’ Themes

Drawing upon my Authorial Strategy (the process of data handling from data collection to final presentation of findings) discussed in Chapter Five (see section 5.7.1.), this section outlines stages eight to ten to offer discourses that women entrepreneurs’ and followers’ engage with, which shape their experiences of gender within this study.

This section describes how discourses shaping experiences have been identified from the emerging themes identified in Chapter Six. The themes were then analysed across four of Potter's (2004) discourse analysis elements; *variation*, *rhetoric (competing themes)*, *accountability (how participants explain their behaviour or decisions)* and *stake and interest (how they attend to their own and other's interests)*. These highlight the gender complexities and tensions enabling the ambivalence, ambiguity, contradiction and paradox (Hearn, 1998) which emerged in order to identify how women entrepreneurs and followers engage with discourses and how such discourses shape their experiences of entrepreneurial leadership. Discourses are synthesised with extant literature to identify where the discourses do and do not support the literature, before relationships between discourses were identified to develop an original contribution to knowledge.

The sections that follow discuss discourses of *visibility*, *integrity*, *acceptance*, *resistance* and *authenticity*, before outlining a process of *blending*. The discourses and process of blending are then drawn together to construct a theoretical framework to provide further understandings of entrepreneurial leadership against a backcloth of patriarchy, gender and authentic leadership.

7.3 Discourse of Integrity

A discourse of integrity shapes themes of follower perceptions of: trust, tried and tested (she's doing it) and need to be self-aware, and themes of women's experiences of: values: my one steady rock, and embedding values.

A discourse of integrity provides a source for followers to develop and build trust in their women entrepreneurs. In relation to the women entrepreneur's experience's, integrity highlights the importance of and need for women to understand their values and furthermore supports and legitimises their decisions and behaviour within the entrepreneurial leadership process.

There is great alignment with a discourse of integrity and extant understandings of authentic leadership. Gardner *et al.*, (2009: 472) state that "leaders who are seen as keeping their word and displaying actions that are consistent with values and beliefs engender higher levels of trust among followers".

Palanski and Yammarino, (2007) argue that the most appropriate conceptualisation of integrity is the consistency between words and actions. This understanding is in parallel with Avolio *et al.*'s (2004) understanding of how authentic leaders develop trusting relationships with their followers as they "transparently convey their attributes and values, aspirations and weaknesses...followers come to know what the leader values and stands for" (Avolio *et al.*, 2004: 811), therefore placing an emphasis on developing and building trust. A discourse of integrity therefore supports extant understandings of authentic leadership and progresses understanding in the field of gender and entrepreneurial leadership within a small firm context.

7.3.1 A Source to Develop and Build Follower Trust

The theme of *trust* in relation to follower perceptions is shaped by a *discourse of integrity*. It provides a resource from which followers are able to develop and build *trust* in their woman entrepreneur. Followers' voices highlighted that trust was developed through perceived levels of integrity, in relation to "openness" (Follower 3) and "honesty in the communication" (Follower 3) with a sense of "fairness" (Follower 2). This provided followers with the consistency and transparency they desired from their leader. This perception aligns with Avolio *et al.*'s., (2004) contention that trust is one of the processes which links authentic leadership to follower attitudes and behaviours, and Gardner *et al.*'s., (2009: 472) assertion of follower perceptions of leader integrity as a "direct and positive relationship with follower trust".

When authentic leaders are viewed by followers as genuine, reliable and displaying high levels of integrity, high levels of trust will be elicited (Gardner *et al.*, 2005). The importance and intertwined nature, of trust and authentic leadership is highlighted by Avolio *et al.*, (2004). They suggest that trust results in positive organisational outcomes, outlining that when "followers believe in their leader's ability, integrity, and benevolence, they are more trusting and willing to engage in risk-taking behaviours" (Avolio *et al.*, 2004: 811). Consequently, trust within the leadership relationship is not possible without authenticity in terms of self-awareness and relational transparency (Avolio *et al.*, 2004). The need for self-awareness is discussed in section 7.3.2.

In order for followers to perceive their leaders as integruous and to enable trust to build, they must first witness their woman entrepreneur's behaviour; highlighted through the theme of *tried and tested (she's doing it)*.

The theme *tried and tested (she's doing it)* highlights followers' agency through their perceptions of their woman entrepreneurs behaviour. Followers described and evidenced the credibility of their woman entrepreneur (also discussed in a discourse of authenticity in section 7.7.2) through their understanding of what she was currently 'doing' and what she had already achieved. For example, "she's just really trying hard" (Follower 2), "she's doing it and she's doing it very successfully" (Follower 4). Follower 5 highlights how the "length of time she's been doing it" and that her woman entrepreneur has been "tried and tested" is the "secret ingredient" to her credibility.

The patriarchal backcloth of this thesis provides an understanding from a gender perspective of how followers' experiences are shaped by this discourse of integrity. Patriarchal structures in relation to; mode of production, relations in paid labour, state and culture (Walby, 1989), continue to position and support men as natural and legitimate figures of authority, allowing them to access power and privilege (Simpson and Lewis, 2005). Consequently, within the given gender binary (Mavin, 2009b) women are positioned as 'Other' (Butler, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1953) within the entrepreneurial leadership process and, therefore, jolt assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) when they take up a leadership role within the context of entrepreneurship. The followers in this study, therefore, perceive, either reflexively or non-reflexively (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010), that their women entrepreneurs are the 'Other' (Butler, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1953) entrepreneur leader, who must earn their trust through the behaviours they witness, to a far greater degree than men. This is because followers search for their women entrepreneurs' consistency between words and actions (Palanski and Yammarino, 2007) through their "openness" (Follower 3), "honesty in the communication" (Follower 3) and a sense of "fairness" (Follower 2); shaping their level of trust for their woman entrepreneur.

7.3.2 Understanding Values to Support and Legitimise Behaviour

Related to the theme to build *trust* from followers perceptions, a further follower theme, *need to be self aware*, also identifies expectations that women entrepreneurs must be self aware to "know [their] limitations" (Follower 5) and relate transparently with their followers. Follower 4 describes her expectation within the entrepreneurial leadership process that there should be a "no holds barred and no holding back" approach so that entrepreneur leaders are "completely congruent as [people]" and are "able to identify with self".

Follower 3 also outlined the expectation she places upon her woman entrepreneur to communicate “this is my values” to followers to highlight her self-awareness in order to relay to followers how they are expected to behave. This highlights how a discourse of integrity has shaped Follower 3’s experiences as she expects her women entrepreneur to be aware of themselves and convey their self to followers so they are able to understand what the women stand for (Avolio *et al.*, 2004), and see the consistency between their words and behaviours (Palanski and Yammarino, 2007) in what they witness and see for themselves. The emphasis followers place on seeing their woman entrepreneurs’ behaviour to understand their integrity develops Ladkin and Taylor (2010) and Field’s (2007) understanding of authentic leadership in which they highlight that it is unclear *how* leaders’ integrity becomes apparent to followers. Within this study the integrity of the women entrepreneurs’ became apparent to followers as they resonated with the women entrepreneurs’ behaviour.

Moving from follower themes to women entrepreneurs’ themes of experience, there is evidence to support the understanding that a discourse of integrity also shapes women’s experiences. This is seen through their need to understand their own values and how they influence their thoughts, decisions and behaviours within entrepreneurial leadership, becoming an internal compass (Gardner *et al.*, 2005) which guides their experiences.

Integrity is most clearly illustrated through the women’s experience theme *values- my one steady rock*. Helen states that she has “to take strength from what [she] think[s] is right because that is the only way [she] know[s] how to do it”. Through this statement she highlights how her actions and behaviours are underpinned by her internal sense of what is right and wrong because, for her, there is no other resource from which she can draw upon other than to be honest and truthful to herself. Furthermore, when Beverley describes her values she refers to integrity as “the one steady rock that keeps us going”, illustrating the strength that she also draws from integrity, particularly during times of struggle. She suggests that whilst mistakes can and will be made, her integrity is the constant, which through all circumstances provides, her with the internal resolve to continue.

Integrity was the one value common across the women entrepreneurs' voices which they highlighted as guiding them through situations of uncertainty, constructing this discourse as a resource which serves them well. Both Beverley and Helen highlighted that being guided by their value of integrity, in relation to truthfulness and honesty to themselves has served them well in relation to their employees and clients enabling them to remain true to values. Helen recalls an example where her values were tested when she had to decide between submitting a tender in a way prescribed by the authorities or in a way that reflected her values and her business. Whilst she acknowledged that remaining true to her values got "in the way of being popular" with the authorities, the clients she served liked her approach which made her a success from a client perspective. Whilst Helen admitted to the angst when making the decision to be remain true to her value of integrity, there was a sense of moral justice, as by riding through the rejection from the authorities and remaining true to her values she came out from the other side in a favourable position with her clients. Beverley also draws upon an example of rejecting a lucrative piece of work from a client because she felt she was not the right person for the contract and suggested to her client to approach other companies, which she states "taps into integrity". By staunchly remaining true to her values, Beverley had a sense of being on the right path, enhancing her credibility with her client, building trust with her client and her employees as she lived out her values through her behaviour, maintaining a consistency between words and actions (Palanski and Yammarino, 2007).

The theme of *embedding values*, highlights how women entrepreneur leaders can ensure their values are lived out through their business, particularly their value of integrity. Different strategies are drawn upon by the women in terms of awareness raising and formalising values through procedures to ensure that their value of integrity remains central to their business.

Helen appreciates that her followers may not subscribe to the same values as her, recognising their agency within the entrepreneurial leadership process, and therefore, to ensure her core value of integrity is maintained, she works to ensure her employees and her clients are aware of her values. In contrast, Beverley operationalises her values through her recruitment and selection process by developing a behavioural and values based interview, further demonstrating how she lives out her values and actively works to embed them within her business to model her employee around her values. By integrating her values within the recruitment and selection process, Beverley goes against the norm of typical procedures within her sector.

Consequently, she became the ‘talk of the town’, gaining her positive publicity, *embracing her difference*. This highlights the interconnected nature of discourses (Gannon and Davies, 2007) as the theme acceptance and embracing differences is also shaped by a *discourse of visibility* (see section 7.4) and a discourse of *acceptance* (see section 7.6)

Natalie describes an incident when a follower’s behaviour challenged her value of integrity by not offering an existing supplier the opportunity to better their quote when a new supplier undercut their price. She understands that her followers do not always hold the same values that she does, as within this incident the follower’s value was shaped by the need to get a cheaper price thereby saving the company money. Natalie now has “a system in place” which she has made everyone across her business aware of that whenever they research quotes, they must always return to a supplier with which they have an existing relationship in order to give them the opportunity to better or match the cheaper quote. By implementing this system she is reassured that whilst her values may not be the same as her followers, they are protected and preserved through the formalisation of procedures, enabling her values to be lived out by her followers.

This develops extant conceptualisations of authentic leadership as current understandings do not explore how the positive modelling offered by Gardner *et al.*, (2005) is achieved in reality. Gardner *et al.*, (2005) argue that processes of self-awareness and self-regulation foster positive modelling amongst followers encouraging them to also engage in self-awareness and self-regulation processes, generating outcomes of trust, engagement and workplace well being which, contributes to sustainable and veritable performance. How this occurs within an organisation is not explored at a practical level (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010) and assumes that by way of osmosis followers begin to engage in the same processes as their leaders. The theme of *embedding values shaped by a discourse of integrity* supports understandings of how women entrepreneur leaders can ensure their values are lived out and protected within their business. This aligns with George *et al.*’s., (2007: 135) understanding that “leadership principles are values translated in actions”, highlighting the need to convey their values through processes, understood to be actions, interactions and behaviours (Chia, 1995). Furthermore, values conveyed through processes facilitates a longer term goal of how followers may begin to develop similar values to women entrepreneur leaders as their experiences within practice builds through the evidence they observe and its influence through action.

Drawing upon the patriarchal backcloth (Walby, 1989), from which women have learnt to become entrepreneurs (Ahl, 2006; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a, b; Lewis, 2006, 2009; Marlow *et al.*, 2009; Marlow, 2006; Mirchandani, 1999; Shaw *et al.*, 2009) and leaders (Bryans and Mavin, 2003, Elliott and Stead, 2008) the women formalise their values within procedure to address, either reflexively or non-reflexively (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010), their followers gendered interpretations, as by integrating their values within a procedure followers must adhere to them.

A *discourse of integrity* shapes both women experiences and their followers' perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership in terms of a source from which followers can develop and build trust with their women entrepreneurs. This highlights the importance of women being aware of their values to support and legitimise their decisions and behaviour.

7.4 Discourse of Visibility

A *discourse of visibility* shapes themes of follower experiences: *trust, tried and tested (she's doing it)* and *need to be self-aware*, and themes of women entrepreneur leaders' experiences: *awareness of difference; accepting and embracing difference; responding to difference*, and *embedding values*.

A discourse of visibility is understood to be the need to display or make apparent, thoughts, attitudes and behaviours, either through reflexive or non-reflexive (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010) practices and practising (Martin, 2006). This discourse also draws upon Simpson and Lewis' (2005) conceptualisation of visibility which at a surface level focuses upon women's difference from the masculine norm and capitalises upon their 'token' status to exploit their power of visibility.

A discourse of visibility, therefore, shapes experiences of entrepreneurial leadership in relation to women's visibility to their followers, providing a source from which they are able to observe and witness women's behaviour to develop trust. Visibility is also drawn upon as a resource which shapes women entrepreneurs' decisions and behaviours to exploit their embodied difference, differentiating themselves positively from the masculine social construction of entrepreneurial leadership.

How a discourse of visibility shapes follower and women entrepreneurs' experiences in this study is discussed in the sections that follow to address the research question that guides this thesis 'leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?'.

7.4.1 Women's Visibility: A Source for Followers to Build Trust

The *trust* theme of followers' perceptions is shaped by the discourse of visibility as Follower 2 highlights how trust has built over time, observing and working with the woman entrepreneur leader from the businesses start-up; "I've known her from when we first opened as well 'em you get to build like the trust with someone". Follower 3 highlights the trust which has developed as a consequence of witnessing how their leader has changed her communicating style with her employees to become more open and inclusive. The transparency of communication outlines follower expectations of the women to relate transparently, a key requirement within the authentic leadership concept (Gardner *et al.*, 2005). For followers, the women entrepreneur leaders engaging in such a process of relational transparency builds follower trust, is also shaped by a discourse of integrity (see section 7.5) of their women entrepreneur leaders.

The need to be *visible* to gain follower *trust* develops conceptual understandings of authentic leadership, which suggests that life stories provide followers with the main source of information from which they base their judgements regarding a leader's authenticity (Shamir and Eilam, 2005). It is, therefore, a conceptual assumption that followers wish to know and share leader's personal experiences as no empirical data supported this understanding, suggesting that its prominence within follower judgements are less important within the entrepreneurial leadership process. Drawing upon Tracy and Tretheway (2005) contention, from an identity perspective, that working lives within organisational settings are more significant than home lives, perhaps this understanding can be related to further understandings of followers' expectations of their women entrepreneur leaders. From this perspective, perhaps followers have the expectation that their judgements of leaders will be based upon their organisational and workplace experiences.

The theme *tried and tested (she's doing it)* in relation to follower expectations, places great emphasis upon what the women entrepreneur leaders are 'doing' or have 'done' previously.

Witnessing the “hard work” of her woman entrepreneur leader to get through the “quiet spells” (Follower 2), the “length of time she’s been doing it” (Follower, 5) or the simple fact that “she’s doing it” (Follower, 4), followers perceive their women entrepreneur leaders to be credible. This interpretation progresses understandings of entrepreneurship, where credibility and success are based upon an economic model of growth (Fenwick, 2002; Marlow, 2006; Graham, 2005; Patterson and Mavin, 2009). Instead, followers’ understandings of expectations of entrepreneurial leadership are shaped by the need for *visibility* of their behaviour and success.

The *need to be self-aware* is a theme of follower expectations, which is implicated by a discourse of *visibility*. Follower 3, highlights the need for her woman entrepreneur leader to not only be aware of her “own values” but also, for her to embed them within the business with the expectation that followers will also hold the same set of values. Follower 5, highlights the need “to know your limitations”, with Follower 4, admires the “congruence” of words and actions of a male entrepreneur.

7.4.2 Exploiting Women’s Difference Through Visibility

The *awareness of difference* theme of women entrepreneur leaders’ experiences is shaped by a discourse of *visibility* as the women, whether they perceive themselves to be different or not, have an awareness of how others perceive them to be different. Although, Helen and Natalie each themselves as a “business person”, they recognise that “indicators from outside of the business” (Helen) mark them as different because they are women and, therefore, highlight visible (Simpson and Lewis, 2005). Natalie’s recognition of her embodied difference as a woman within the male dominated construction sector leads her to draw upon reflexive gender practices which suppress her visibility through her choice of dress so that she does not look “still when tradesmen are coming in”. When meeting clients and employees for the first time, she permits and almost encourages them to assume that she is an employee. From a client perspective, she believes the business will be perceived to be a “safe pair of hands” and from a follower perspective she is able to experience for herself their manner when speaking to people, and whether she would like to represent her company on site without the fact that she is the boss, creating a facade with that. This is further symbolised as she describes how she purposefully does not have a job title or position on her business cards, enabling her to be whoever her follower perceive and most importantly expect her to be.

Natalie, acknowledges that being a young woman entrepreneur leader of a business within the construction sector results in “tradesmen” changing “the way they act with” her. Engaging in such gender practice (Martin, 2003; 2006) *doing* gender, she maintains others perception of the social order (Nencel, 2010), reducing her visibility, preventing any jolt in assumptions (Mavin, 2009b). In contrast to Natalie, within Sandra’s business’ sector location, her visibility is necessary, “because its childcare people expect women to be” in her position as it aligns with women’s social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) as women’s work within the domestic, private transfers into waged work within the public space.

Following on from the theme of *awareness of difference*, a theme of *accepting and embracing difference* is drawn upon by the women entrepreneur leaders as they comfortably accept and embrace their visibility and the advantages it brings to be cast as different. Susan outlines how others’ limited expectations of her have been favourable, as they do not presume her knowledge and she is able to ask questions without others feeling threatened. Beverley highlights, although she is “not wildly keen on it, but the soft skills side of things” have been advantageous in developing relationships. Beverley notes that because of her ‘difference’ within the sector there are no rules of how she ought to behave and run her business, therefore, she views her business as a “blank piece of paper”, a liberating experience from which she had the opportunity to set her business apart from stereotypical law firms.

Sandra and Helen openly draw upon their experiences of motherhood as advantageous for their business. Sandra likens running her business to “running your family but on a different level”. By drawing upon her personal and domestic experience to the business setting, Sandra engages in the process of persuasion to convince others of her ability to be an entrepreneur leader, by conforming to her social role expectations (Eagly, 1987, Eagly *et al.*, 2000) as a woman and mother. Helen highlights the need to “recognise” rather than suppress the skills she has developed as a mother raising her children to support the management of others.

The theme of *responding to difference*, highlights the need for the women to be visible in their undoing of gender in order to be perceived as credible women entrepreneur leaders. Helen suggests that “how people respond to you tends to give you a hint as to what they see you as”, which highlights her awareness of her perceived difference. She draws upon an example of a technical IT meeting within which her expertise is questioned; she therefore suggests that within this situation she has “to be slightly more direct in [her] approach because some people are looking for a bit of weakness”, undoing gender to establish her technical expertise.

Beverley recognises her social role incongruity (Eagly and Karau, 2002) as a woman and a professional lawyer. She highlights the need to exude confidence in order to “pull people along behind” and build her credibility for her to be recommended to others. Beverley admits to struggling with this at times, but has found a strategy which has proved to be successful for her demonstrating to her followers and potential clients that her clients are “well looked after”. She, therefore, builds confidence within her professional capacity by satisfying her social role expectation as a woman of caring for her clients. Beverley lives out the caring, satisfying social role expectations of women (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) within her business, reassuring followers of her trustworthiness and consequent integrity, doing gender.

Embedding values is a further theme which highlights how a *discourse of visibility* has influenced women entrepreneur leaders’ experiences as they formalise their values to breathe life into them, which is apparent to followers within everyday practices. Natalie “puts a system in place” to ensure her followers live out her values in her absence when sourcing quotes and Beverley draws upon her values during the recruitment and selection method to ensure her followers align with her own core values. This discourse of visibility, therefore, highlights how women entrepreneur leaders formalise their values through organisational procedures and systems to make their follower aware of their values to ensure that it becomes part of everyday business practice. This progresses understandings of authentic leadership as conceptual understandings (e.g. Gardner *et al.*, 2005) do not explore how women entrepreneur leaders relate their values transparently to followers. Conceptual understandings suggest that positive modelling occurs through a process of osmosis despite this not having been empirically developed (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010).

7.5 Discourse of Resistance

A discourse of resistance shapes themes of follower experiences of: *Women the same but different to men* and *Entrepreneurship and leadership the same but different*, and themes of women's experiences of: *Struggling with entrepreneurial leadership* and *Entrepreneur = men and/or celebrity status*.

A discourse of resistance provides an understanding of how both women and their followers' resist the intertwined nature of entrepreneurship and leadership and women resist the masculine social construction of entrepreneurial leadership. Furthermore, a discourse of resistance also provides an understanding of how followers resist their women entrepreneurs' resistance in relation to their lack of acceptance of their women entrepreneurs' undoing of gender. The women entrepreneurs' behaviour jolts with followers' assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) of acceptable feminine behaviour for a woman, therefore resulting in their resistance.

In this thesis, *resistance* is understood to be a process whereby the social order is refuted as dominant discourses are pushed continuously against the limits in an attempt to open up understandings into a state of social flux (Katila and Merilainen, 1999) which has the potential to lead to social change (Nencel, 2010). This offers an alternative space, which continually challenges masculine supremacy within a process of entrepreneurial leadership, enabling the emergence of new knowledge (Sunderland, 2004). The sections that follow consider how a discourse of resistance shapes women entrepreneurs and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective within this study.

7.5.1 Women's Resistance to Masculine Construction of Entrepreneurship

The women entrepreneur's theme of experience *Struggling with Entrepreneurial Leadership*, highlights the women's resistance to identify themselves as entrepreneurs. For example, Helen comments that entrepreneur is not a word she has "any great feelings for". She does not describe herself in that way but is aware that other people do. Helen reaffirms that whilst others may attach the label of 'entrepreneur' to her, she "didn't step up because [she is] an entrepreneur". Natalie also rejects being labelled an entrepreneur stating; concurrently

I don't really think of myself as an entrepreneur. I view the business very much, of like a, as that is my job you know and it doesn't reflect what I do as a person and it doesn't reflect into what I do as a person.

Either reflexively or non-reflexively (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010), Helen and Natalie resist being labelled entrepreneurs. The masculine construction of entrepreneurship through linguistic practices and an economic rationale (Ahl, 2006; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a, b; Lewis, 2006, 2009, Marlow *et al.*, 2009; Marlow, 2006; Mirchandani, 1999; Shaw *et al.*, 2009) against a patriarchal backcloth, prohibits social flux to allow women to blend symbolic spaces of masculinity and femininity to find a place which is comfortable for them within a process of entrepreneurial leadership.

The complexity of experiences within entrepreneurial leadership, and consequent need for blending between symbolic spaces, resonates in Natalie's assertion that the label "doesn't reflect into what I do as a person". Natalie cannot identify with the label because it does not represent her as a person in terms of what she does in her everyday business life. Whilst Natalie's statement suggests she remains true to self within her business which aligns with understandings of authentic leadership, requiring leaders to be self-aware in relation to their values, motive/goals, emotions and identity and transparently relate these to followers (Gardner *et al.*, 2005), she risks jolting followers' assumptions. Against a patriarchal backcloth, women entrepreneur leaders have the dual pressure of performing to satisfy entrepreneurial leadership expectations whilst convincing others they are conforming to "to expectations concerning appropriate female behaviour" (Eagly, 2005: 470). Within this understanding, taking into account the gender dualism, it is therefore not surprising that Natalie resists that masculine expectations of her "job role" do not reflect her as a person. Drawing upon a discourse of resistance is perhaps a useful strategy for Natalie to highlight the complexities of her experiences within a process of entrepreneurial leadership to ensure her experiences cannot be simplified and labelled as masculine or feminine, but a blend of each, depending upon the context.

The theme *entrepreneur = men and/or celebrity status*, is also shaped by women's resistance to masculine construction of entrepreneurship. As Susan comments:

I think you hear that word (entrepreneur) and I associate the people sort of like [well known regional male entrepreneurs] and um the guys that I have met in the [networking organisation] and Anita Roddick.

Sandra identifies “Ghandi” and “Martin Luther King” and Natalie associates the word with “Richard Branson”. The people outlined are all powerful and well known male role models highlighting that a patriarchal backdrop supports understandings of who can be perceived to entrepreneurs within the given gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b). Consequently, it is understandable that Natalie then goes on to state that “entrepreneur just doesn’t fit with me so I’ve never really classed myself as being an entrepreneur”. Her resistance emerges through her distance between her understandings of self and who she perceives satisfies entrepreneurial expectations.

7.5.2 Followers Resisting Women’s Resistance

The follower theme *women the same but different to a man*, is shaped by followers resistance to women’s resistance within the entrepreneurial leadership process in their undoing of gender (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007). Followers observing their women entrepreneurs undoing of gender, as they perform masculine behaviours through a socially perceived woman’s body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) jolts followers’ assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) of appropriate female behaviour. There is incongruity between the women entrepreneurs’ sex category and gender behaviour set against a patriarchal backcloth. Consequently, followers in this study reject or perceive such behaviour negatively as when their women entrepreneurs perform masculine behaviour which goes against their socially perceived sex category and socially perceived gender social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000).

Follower 4 discusses how her experience of “female bosses haven’t been particularly positive” as she continues by stating “competition” is the issue. Competitiveness is a term associated with masculinity and agentic descriptions (Eagly and Carli, 2007) understood to be effective leadership behaviour. However, within the gender binary this presents women with “social role incongruity” (Eagly and Karau, 2002) as their social role expectations as feminine women are at odds with their entrepreneurial leadership expectations to behave in a masculine or agentic way. Therefore, when Follower 4’s perceives a woman boss to be behaving in a way perceived to be masculine and agentic this jolts her assumptions of how she expects her woman entrepreneurs to behave and, therefore, she rejects her woman entrepreneur’s undoing of gender – resisting a woman’s resistance.

Follower 2 also resists her women entrepreneur's resistance through her response which outlines a gendered understanding of acceptable and appropriate behaviour for her woman entrepreneur. Although Follower 2 admits that she has never worked for a man she states that they are different and describes women in communal and feminine terms such "willing to work around you", "easy to get along with". This strategy is what Nencel (2010) terms as a strategy of accommodation as the gender social role is highlighted and reinforced through her positioning of women as accommodating and amenable understood to be feminine terms, therefore, casting women as the 'Other' (Butler, 2004' de Beauvoir, 1953). Follower 1 also draws upon a strategy of accommodation (Nencel, 2010), reinforcing the social order in her description of her woman entrepreneur as "softer" and "more understanding" in relation to family issues and illness. Follower 1 also highlights this as potentially advantageous celebrating gendered understandings.

Within a gender binary understanding, what the followers explicitly state in relation to behaviour they find acceptable and appropriate for their women entrepreneurs within this study, perhaps further implies that the opposite - masculine and agentic behaviour - is resisted as it is deemed inappropriate. Within the context of this study a discourse of resistance further supports answering the overall research question "leader and follower perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?", as it serves to highlight followers' experiences of gender within entrepreneurial leadership in relation to their perceptions of appropriate behaviour of their women entrepreneurs performed through a socially perceived woman's body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

To further surface the complexities of experiences of gender within entrepreneurial leadership, a discourse of acceptance is outlined in the section that follows, which contradicts a discourse of resistance.

7.6 Discourse of Acceptance

A discourse of acceptance shapes themes of follower experiences of: women the same but different to men and celebrating success, and themes of women's experiences of: awareness of difference, acceptance and embracing difference, responding to difference and involvement.

A discourse of acceptance provides an understanding of how the social order is reproduced (Nencel, 2010) and women are positioned as the 'Other' (Butler, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1953) against the patriarchal backcloth of this thesis. A discourse of acceptance is understood in relation to women's acceptance of their difference within the social order which is drawn upon by the women as a positive differentiating factor within their business and drawn upon by followers to maintain the social order in response to their struggle to understand women's behaviour within binary thinking.

7.6.1 Women's Acceptance of Difference as a Positive Differentiating Factor

In the women's experience theme of *awareness of difference*, Sandra highlights a positive from being a woman running a childcare business because "it's a woman's job to look after children". This highlights gender congeniality (Eagly and Johnson, 1990) and how Sandra 'does gender well' as there is congruence between her sex category and gender behaviour (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) in leading a childcare business. Against a patriarchal backcloth, the patriarchal mode of production which positions women's work within the domestic sphere and men in waged labour (Walby, 1989), the transfer of women's domestic duties into paid labour is deemed to be more acceptable for women as the social order remains unchallenged. This is also highlighted within the theme accepting and embracing difference, as Sandra and Helen both highlight that their experiences within the domestic sphere have supported them within the public sphere of waged labour. Helen highlights that the "skills you acquire as a mother and dealing with your offspring and their friends" have great advantages in dealing with people. Sandra likens managing bills within the home in terms of mortgages and insurance to dealing with "rents" and "insurances" within a business, therefore, drawing on their difference within the social order to support them positively within the entrepreneurial leadership process. This perpetuates women's social order as they are able to identify advantages from their 'Other' (Butler, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1953) status within a domestic sphere and, therefore, do gender well. However, by explicitly stating their skills of doing gender well have supported them within entrepreneurial leadership, a process constructed upon masculine terms, the women entrepreneurs also do gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). As Mavin and Grandy (2010) argue, simultaneously doing gender well and doing gender differently creates new opportunities to unsettle gender binaries overtime.

Natalie also draws a positive from her awareness of difference operating within the traditionally male dominated sector of construction that “other people are you know, are more, not impressed but [they] think it’s quite good”. Natalie’s visibility in relation to her token status at a surface conceptualisation (Simpson and Lewis, 2005) and, consequently doing gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) enables her to stand out. Natalie perceives jolting assumptions to be a positive in relation to others feedback and standing out. Furthermore, she also uses her difference as a positive when dealing with “tradesmen”, because they do not expect her to be the person in charge and on meeting them she does not enlighten them to her status as she finds it “easier” and “you can get a bit more, you get more response from them”. Therefore, Natalie, moves from embracing how she jolts assumptions with her difference, to doing gender well by not asserting her authority or jolting assumptions by using her difference to blend in to get more from “tradesmen”. However, this is a complex picture as Natalie simultaneously does gender well by not asserting her authority with “tradesmen”, however, in doing so, she also does gender differently. Natalie describes how often the purpose behind not clarifying her position with “tradesmen” is “to see what they’re really like with their guard down”. Natalie likes to see for herself how potential employees respond and interact with people given she cannot be on site all of the time and likes to know that, irrespective of who they are talking to, that they are polite, which shifts her position to a more powerful one.

In the women’s experience theme of *accepting and embracing difference* Susan highlights that she is able to glean much advice from men because they are not as “aggressive” with her, therefore, she is able to ask “direct questions”. The patriarchal backcloth which positions women as ‘Other’ (Butler, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1953) and ineffectual within gendered understandings that women behave in communal and feminine ways (Mavin, 2009b) create an understanding whereby women are non-serious entrepreneurs (Lewis, 2006) and are, therefore, not deemed to be competition. Consequently, Susan highlights the lack of expectation placed on her gives her an advantage in terms of the advice and guidance she receives, which supports her business development. Therefore, she does gender well by understanding her perceived role as a woman entrepreneur as ‘non-serious’ (Lewis, 2006) and, therefore, perceived to be less threatening to the competition, to do gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) by asking questions which support the development of her business.

Whilst Beverley tries not to make a gendered assumption that all women have “soft skills” and that “all men lack them” she suggests that for her “there are models of behaviour that operate in business and in law particularly which as a woman, I don’t adhere or aspire to”. However, Beverley then outlines behaviours aligned with Eagly and Carli’s (2007) understanding of communal behaviours which are sex role stereotyped to women (Mavin, 2009b); “empathy”, “good communication skills” and “good relationship building skills”. As a result of her feminine communal behaviour Beverley argues that she has some “very loyal clients” with whom she has worked with for a long time. Therefore, whilst Beverley draws upon a feminised difference within her approach which has been positive in developing long term client relationships, she continues by rejecting the claim that it is a “feminised” approach and that she’s “not mothering anybody”. Beverley, therefore, does gender well by performing expected feminine behaviour through her socially perceived woman’s body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) before moving to reject descriptions of her behaviour as “feminised” or “mothering” as she attempts to resist gendered interpretations of her entrepreneurial leadership experiences by doing gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

In simultaneously doing gender well and doing gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), Beverley creates a space within her experience of entrepreneurial leadership which has the potential to disrupt and unsettle the gender binary. However, given understandings of gender and the language available to us (Coupland, 2001; Styhre *et al.*, 2005) attempting to disrupt the gender binary is complex as to speak of difference reproduces difference but, refusing to speak of difference at all, allows difference to go unnoticed (Styhre *et al.*, 2005). This is evident within Beverley’s struggle to speak of her difference in a positive way without gendering herself.

Whilst it is not drawn upon as a positive differentiating factor, the theme of *responding to difference* (discussed within section 7.7 a discourse of authenticity), highlights women’s acceptance of their place within the social order against a patriarchal backcloth. Helen recognises that she needs to “be slightly more direct in [her] approach because some people are looking for a bit of weakness”. Given their position within given gender dualism, they are required to “pull people along behind you” in develop the “confidence” in what they women do.

The theme of *involvement* draws upon how women embrace others within the process of entrepreneurial leadership as involvement aligns with feminine communal behaviours (Eagly and Carli, 2007), enabling women to conform to their social role expectations as feminine women (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) and do gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Susan highlights that she discusses issues with her followers because she believes “everybody has got something to offer” and she is willing to look and listen, doing gender in relation to conforming to her socially perceived gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Martin, 2006). However, Susan does state that “ultimately” she “would make the final decision”, highlighting her perceived need to retain authority and assertiveness within the entrepreneurial leadership process. In Susan’s case, perhaps doing gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) by involving followers is a strategy to avoid further jolts in assumptions (Mavin, 2009b) by performing appropriate feminine behaviour through a socially perceived woman’s body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) in order to justify her assertiveness in final decision making process as she simultaneously does gender differently to create possibilities to unsettle the gender binary.

Helen also relates strongly to the need for involvement as she suggests through her understanding that she must negotiate and persuade with her employees every day, “every time you open your mouth” because for her “it’s very important that people feel included” because she wants her employees to “not only be members of but owners”. This is particularly important within Gupta *et al.*’s., (2004) understanding of entrepreneurial leadership which requires a supporting cast within followers to work towards a visionary scenario. Consequently, emerging understandings of entrepreneurial leadership which acknowledge both masculine and feminine, agentic and communal behaviours (Eagly and Carli, 2007) support developments from a gender perspective in its attempt to blend symbolic spaces to allow women (and men) to locate themselves within a space which simultaneously allows them to do gender well and do gender differently to begin to challenge the gender binary (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

7.6.2 Follower Acceptance: Struggling to Understand Women within the Gender Binary

The follower theme *women the same but different to men* accepts women's difference to men, perpetuating understandings of the social order. Follower 1 highlights how her woman entrepreneur is "understanding" in relation to childcare problems for both women and men employees. Follower 1 then makes a direct comparison to men who she contends would expect their "wives to deal with it mostly".

Follower 1 also describes her woman entrepreneur as "softer" and Follower 2 describe her woman entrepreneur as "easy to get along with" aligned with communal understandings sex role stereotyped to women (Mavin, 2009b) and acceptance within her social roles expectations to be feminine women (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000).

In the theme celebrating success, Follower 5 highlights the struggle to articulate a description of her woman entrepreneur which captures what she does within the language we have available within the gender binary (Coupland, 2001; Styhre *et al.*, 2005). Follower 5 states that "it's hard to put into words you just accept her for what she is. She's successful!". Understanding that her woman entrepreneur's behaviour blends across symbolic spaces of femininity and masculinity, Follower 5 observes her woman entrepreneur doing gender well and simultaneously doing gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) which unsettles the gender binary. This is difficult for Follower 5 to understand from a non-reflexive perspective as she is perhaps unaware of the gender in their action (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010) as the masculine norm is invisible (Simpson and Lewis, 2005).

This discourse of acceptance also interconnects to a discourse of resistance where followers resist their woman entrepreneur's resistance (see section 7.5 above) to their social role expectations - undoing gender (Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007). For example, Follower 4's negative portrayal of her woman entrepreneur's competitiveness as she does gender differently performing a masculine behaviour through a socially perceived woman's body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Against a patriarchal backcloth, working within binary thinking of opposed symbolic spaces of masculinity and femininity which prohibit social flux, it is difficult to comprehend how women can maintain a dual presence (Gherardi 1994).

Therefore, as followers discuss and describe their respective women entrepreneurs, their dual presence creates struggle for followers within binary mode of thinking. Consequently, accepting women as feminine and doing gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Martin, 2006) is more acceptable for them and does not jolt their assumptions.

7.7 Discourse of Authenticity

A discourse of authenticity shapes follower themes of experiences: *trust* and *celebrating success*, and themes of women's experiences of: *responding to difference* and *values: my one steady rock*.

A discourse of authenticity is understood in this thesis to be how women entrepreneurs are able to manage their doing and undoing of gender in order to simultaneously do gender well and do gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) in a way that is comfortable for them but also socially acceptable to their followers within entrepreneurial leadership. Furthermore, a discourse of authenticity provides an understanding of how women draw upon their values to support and justify their decisions and behaviours to themselves and also be socially acceptable to their followers within the entrepreneurial leadership process. Followers' perceptions of their women entrepreneur's authenticity is also interconnected with a discourse of visibility shaping follower trust in their woman entrepreneur.

The sections that follow discuss how a discourse of authenticity shapes women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership to support answering the research question which guides this thesis "leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced within small firms?".

7.7.1 Values: Supporting Behaviour and Reassuring Self and Others

The women's experience theme of *values: my one steady rock*, acts as women's internal compass (Avolio and Gardner, 2005) guiding and supporting their decision making and behaviour. As Helen comments, "I have to take strength from what I think is right because that's the only way I know how do to it". Sandra's response also highlights how she only knows how to be herself:

No matter which part of me you get, you always get me...not something, I don't pretend to be something else in a different thing. Which seems funny doesn't it, but because I just thought well that's me. I can't be a me that goes to work and a me that stays at home.

Beverley outlines that "adhering to the values is the one steady rock you know that keeps us going". Understanding Helen, Sandra and Beverley's comments against the patriarchal backcloth of this thesis provides further understandings of the complexities within their entrepreneurial leadership experiences from a gender perspective.

This thesis recognises that entrepreneurship has been constructed upon masculine terms (Mirchandani, 1999; Ahl, 2006; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a, b; Lewis, 2006, 2009; Marlow *et al.*, 2009; Marlow, 2006; Shaw *et al.*, 2009) and that women have also learnt to become leaders against a patriarchal backdrop (Bryans and Mavin, 2003; Elliott and Stead, 2008). Consequently, within a gender binary women (and men) are prohibited social flux, placing social role expectations on women to be feminine and men to be masculine (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000). For women to display multiple enactments of masculinities and femininities simultaneously, they would fail to gain social acceptance from their followers because this jolt assumptions of appropriate behaviour for a woman (Mavin, 2009b). This understanding is illustrated within Beverley's account in the women's experiences theme *responding to difference*.

Beverley understands how she jolts assumptions with followers (Mavin, 2009b) in her difference as a woman entrepreneur leading in the male dominate law sector. Whilst she is able to do "soft skills" and "be friendly", doing gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), being an entrepreneur leader within law is not congenial to Beverley's gender (Eagly and Johnson, 1990). She recognises that "being a female means [she has] to make an effort to get external recognition" and instil "confidence in others" to be taken "seriously" because she does gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Beverley describes that she does this by “adhering to the values” which provide her with “the one steady rock that keeps [her going]” enabling her to simultaneously display enactments of masculinity and femininity.

Without readily available social acceptance to assure Helen, Sandra and Beverley of their decisions and behaviours, they draw strength from their values to support their simultaneous enactments of doing gender well and doing gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) to “pull people along with [them]” (Beverley). By drawing upon their values the women within this study create a new space which unsettles gender binaries (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) and provides a comfortable and authentic place for them to behave and make decisions. A discourse of authenticity, therefore, enables Helen, Sandra and Beverley to draw upon their values as an internal compass (Avolio and Gardner *et al.*, 2005) to direct and reassure them of their decisions and behaviour and “pull people along with [them]” (Beverley).

Furthermore, a strategy of drawing upon women’s own values to support decisions and behaviours aligns with understandings of authentic leadership, which expects leaders to be self-aware (Gardner *et al.*, 2005), to enable them to behave in accordance with their personal values and therefore build trust with their followers (Avolio *et al.*, 2004). Drawing upon this understanding of a discourse of authenticity, authentic leadership supports women within a process of entrepreneurial leadership as they are able to “take strength from what [they] think is right” (Helen) from their own values to understand and make sense of how they engage in a blending process which enables simultaneous enactments of masculinities and femininities.

The next section moves to discuss how a discourse of authenticity shapes followers’ perceptions of trust in their woman entrepreneur’s.

7.7.2 Shaping Follower Trust in Women Entrepreneurs

Interconnected with a discourse of *visibility*, the follower theme of trust highlights followers need to observe their women entrepreneurs’ behaviour in order to develop trust by viewing the congruence between their values and behaviour. Follower 2 comments that because she has known her woman entrepreneur “from when [they] first opened”, and that they “negotiate work” she is able to build trust in her woman entrepreneur.

Follower 3 similarly states that she trusts her woman entrepreneur because they “sit down and [they] discuss things”, linked to women’s theme of *involvement*. Follower 1 also highlights her trust in her woman entrepreneur because she knows through experience that she can “rely” on her. Consequently, trust is gained through followers’ observations and experiences of working with their woman entrepreneur leader, which is also interconnected with a discourse of *integrity* which supports followers’ perceptions of their woman entrepreneurs’ *authenticity*.

The follower theme of *tried and tested (she’s doing it)* linked to the theme of *trust* are also shaped by a discourse of authenticity. As outlined in section 7.3.1, the theme *tried and tested (she’s doing it)* highlights followers individual agency through their evaluations of their woman entrepreneurs behaviour in terms of what she was doing “length of time she’s been doing it” (Follower 5), therefore, she is “tried and tested” (Follower 5). The emphasis of being tried and tested over time, resonates with Mavin and Grandy’s (2010) assertion that over time gender binaries can be unsettled through continuous enactments of femininities and masculinities.

Therefore, perhaps over time as followers within the study observe how their women entrepreneurs simultaneously do gender well and do gender differently, going against women’s socially perceived sex category, (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), followers begin to develop trust from a renewed understanding of gender within entrepreneurial leadership. This understanding aligns with current understandings of authentic leadership as the need for women to relate transparently is crucial as actions and behaviours are a source of follower evaluation of their authenticity (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010).

Given the emphasis placed upon themes of follower expectations of *trust* and *tried and tested (she’s doing it)*, it is important to note that life histories did not explicitly emerge as a key source of follower evaluations of their women entrepreneurs. Leader life histories are positioned as an antecedent of conceptual understandings of authentic leadership (e.g. Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005; Shamir and Eilam, 2005). Follower perceptions within this study of entrepreneurial leadership highlight that their observations of their women entrepreneurs’ behaviour was most important in shaping their trust, leading to positive perceptions of their authenticity.

The follower theme *celebrating success* highlights followers' positive perceptions of their woman entrepreneurs as a result of the success they have observed and, consequently, developed their trust. Follower 3 outlines how her woman entrepreneur leader has the "tenacity" to "bounce back and sort of adapt and refocus". This need to "bounce back", "adapt" and "refocus" aligns with Eagly and Carli's (2007) metaphor of a labyrinth of leadership to describe women's leadership experiences as they are presented with many twists and turns forcing them to re-group and problem solve to continue their journey (Mavin, 2009a).

Follower 4 comments that with her woman entrepreneur "you're set for life and you're secure because she's never going to be without work", highlighting her trust in her woman entrepreneur always being able to provide work. Providing such security is a nurturing role aligned with understandings of femininity and communal behaviour (Eagly and Carli, 2007), therefore, satisfying her social role as a feminine woman (Eagly, 1987, Eagly *et al.*, 2000) and working within the given gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b) and doing gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). Follower 5's comment, celebrating her woman entrepreneurs' success is attributed to her being "there for her staff, she's there for her clients", therefore her success is attributed to her concern for others within the entrepreneurial leadership process which like Follower 4, aligns with women's social role expectations to be feminine women (Eagly, 1987, Eagly *et al.*, 2000).

Therefore within Follower 4 and 5's voices the observed success and consequential trust that develops through their women entrepreneurs' behaviour of doing gender well (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) rather than the simultaneously enactment of doing gender well and doing gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), as outlined in the follower theme of tried and tested, highlights the complexities a discourse of authenticity.

The next section progresses understandings of how women entrepreneurs and followers engage with discourses identified in this study and how this shape experiences of entrepreneurial leadership to offer a process of blending to understand the complexities of women entrepreneurs and followers' experiences of gender.

7.8 Process of Blending

Blending is understood to be a process which enables blurring and merging between and within discourses, creating fluid spaces of discourse overlap. Through such spaces, gender complexities such as ambivalence, ambiguity, contradiction and paradox (Hearn, 1998) can be surfaced to challenge the established gender order (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Blending is understood to be a process rather than discourse because of the actions interactions and relationships between and within discourses which highlight the struggles and contestations (Chia 1995) that emerge through the ambivalence, ambiguity, contradiction and paradox which are surfaced. Furthermore, a key understanding of a process is that actions, interactions and relationships (Chia, 1995) are of “reciprocal influence, having emergent qualities which cannot be reduced to the independent contributions, either of people or of contexts” (Hosking and Morley: 1991:63). Drawing upon this understanding of reciprocal influence (Hosking and Morley, 1991), a process of blending cannot occur with just one discourse but occurs across and between discourses.

This thesis contends that through a process of blending, understood to be interconnected spaces between and within discourses, gender complexities such as ambivalence, ambiguity, contradiction and paradox (Hearn, 1998) can be surfaced where these spaces overlap. Ambivalence is understood to be the co-existence of opposing and conflicting attitudes or feelings which simultaneously reinforce and resists the gender order (Nencel, 2010). This occurs through the blending of discourses of acceptance and resistance.

Contradiction are understood to be a combination of thoughts, actions and behaviours which are opposed and recognise discursive instability as they subvert and reproduce dominant discourses, therefore, offering an opportunity for social change (Sunderland 2004). Ambiguity also opens up the possibility of interpreting an expression, action or behaviour in more than one way, aligned with my subjectivist orientation and FSR approach of situated knowledge (Hartsock, 1983; Smith, 1987; Harding, 1991; Collins, 2000; McCorkel and Myers, 2003) which provides the flexibility for different understandings within entrepreneurial leadership. Furthermore, paradox is understood to be the simultaneous existence of contradictory and mutually exclusive aspects (Pesonen *et al.*, 2009).

Van den Brink and Stobbe (2009: 467) argue that paradox surfaces the ambiguity and contradiction of “how gender is being done, leaving room for the individual agency of women (and men) reproducing as well as challenging and changing gender relations and practices in organisations”.

Understanding the shifts and interconnected nature of discourses within different contexts and across reflexive and non-reflexive spaces (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010) enables understandings of how discourses can be displaced for sufficient time “to create, at least theoretically, a place where new things can be said and new social structures envisioned” (Fletcher, 1999: 24; Weedon, 1997). Blurring the spaces of masculinities and femininities, enabling simultaneous and multiple enactments of masculinities and femininities (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) provides further understandings of how discourses shape and shift women entrepreneurs’ and followers’ experiences of entrepreneurial leadership to challenge the gender binary (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004).

A process of *blending* shapes themes of follower expectations: *I want to be led...I want to be an equal; celebrating success, and entrepreneurship and leadership the same and different*, and themes of women entrepreneur leaders’ experiences of *struggling with entrepreneurial leadership*.

Followers’ theme of expectation of *I want to be led...I want to be equal* highlighted the ambivalence within followers’ voices. Follower 4 highlights that “there are times when I want to be led. There are times when I want affirmation” and time when she simply wants to “work through something” herself. Follower 1 highlights her needs to have an “inspirational leader” but who is also a “coach” and a “mentor”. Follower 5 outlines her need to be treated “as an equal” but she recognises that different contexts may require a “captain of the ship”.

The ambivalence within followers’ expectations within this category is difficult to understand within the confines of the gender binary, as the boundaries of masculinities and femininities, agentic and communal (Eagly and Carli, 2007), become blurred. Consequently, a *discourse of blending*, challenges the social order (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) to provide an understanding of how followers’ expectations require social flux.

The theme of *celebrating success* is also part of follower expectations. Follower 3 perceives her woman entrepreneur leader to be “inspirational” yet “not as inspirational as she has been”, highlighting the ambivalence within her voice as she draws upon contradictory understandings. A *process of blending*, enables an understanding outside of the given gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b) to make sense of the ambiguity, creating the possibility for contradictory understanding to co-exist. Follower 4 describes “you just have to accept her for what she is, she’s successful”. Analysing this quote without being reflexive would perhaps lead to an interpretation steeped within the gender dualism, suggesting that the followers were attempting to keep gender out (Lewis, 2006) rather than taking a more fluid approach and appreciating understandings from outside of the gender dualism.

Taking such a reflexive stance encourages us to rethink followers’ understandings of their woman entrepreneur leader’s entrepreneurial leadership. Whether they are aware of it or not, Follower 3 and 4’s comments highlight the simultaneous enactment of masculinities and femininities (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) within their experiences of entrepreneurial leadership. The need for women entrepreneurs to do gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) within entrepreneurial leadership is commented upon by Follower 1 and 2. Both followers suggest that their women entrepreneurs lack agentic and masculine behaviours for example Follower 1’s desire for her woman entrepreneur to be more assertive and show “a little bit more direction”, with Follower 2 highlighting the need for her woman entrepreneur to confront issues head on rather than allowing external agencies take advantage. In contrast to the central premise of social theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000), followers 1 and 2 expect and want their women entrepreneur to move across the symbolic spaces of masculinities and femininities and go against their socially perceived sex category to do gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). This highlights how a *process of blending* has shaped Follower 1 and 2’s expectations of their respective women entrepreneurs within the entrepreneurial leadership process from a gender perspective.

The theme of *entrepreneurship and leadership – the same but different*, also highlights how a process of blending has shaped follower expectations of entrepreneurial leadership as they expect their women entrepreneurs to do gender well whilst simultaneously doing gender differently within the process. The intertwined nature of followers' understandings of entrepreneurship and leadership emerged through their contradictory and ambivalent responses. Follower 1's discussion of entrepreneurship highlights how understandings of leadership are woven within her response; "understanding different people, understanding different leadership styles". Furthermore, it also highlights Follower 1's expectation of feminine and communal behaviours within a process constructed upon masculine terms (Mirchandani, 1999; Ahl, 2006; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a, b; Lewis, 2006, 2009; Marlow *et al.*, 2009; Shaw *et al.*, 2009) outlining the need to blend the symbolic spaces. Follower 4 also highlights how leadership and entrepreneurship require the "same innate abilities and talents", intertwining the two processes and enactments of masculinity and femininity, before highlighting that the "skills would be rather different".

Follower expectations within this study progress understandings of entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective, as both entrepreneurship and leadership and masculinities and femininities, are not understood to be mutually exclusive but drawn upon to different extents within different contexts. A process of *blending*, therefore, shapes follower expectations and experiences, resulting in ambivalent and contradictory understandings within the entrepreneurial leadership process.

The women entrepreneur leaders' experiences draw upon the *struggling with entrepreneurial leadership* theme to describe the agentic and masculine requirements of the entrepreneurial process. Whilst the women entrepreneur leaders do not identify with the label entrepreneur, they draw upon the agentic descriptions they attached to the term and rejected, to describe their own experiences, blending their entrepreneurial leadership descriptions. Helen highlights her different approaches of leading from the "front with the fastest horse" but also recognises the need to "get people to talk about things to [her] so that other people are involved". For Helen, the need to recognise contextual adjustment is vital:

"You slightly adjust your approach depending on the situation and the person who you are dealing with"

When describing their own behaviour, the women entrepreneurs in this study, outline how they can be agentic and communal for example Sandra highlighting how she can be “approachable” and do gender well and be “authoritarian” and do gender differently (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). However, Sandra stresses that she is always herself. She further draws upon the contextual dependency of “it’s still me” as she suggests “no matter which part” you get; you always get her offering fluidity to the understanding of her entrepreneurial leadership. This highlights how discourses of integrity and authenticity shape and blend the women entrepreneurs’ experiences within this study as they draw upon their values to support, guide and justify their decision making behaviour which Avolio and Gardner (2005) refer to as an internal compass.

A discourse of integrity also links followers’ perceptions of in reaction to developing their trust in their respective women entrepreneurs. Follower 4 highlights how they want a leader that is “very integrous and utterly trustworthy complete confidentiality in everything that we do and how we do it”. The expectation for leaders to be integrous demands openness, honesty and congruence of their self with their leadership role which is inspirational for some followers.

Furthermore, a process of *blending* also shapes women entrepreneur leaders’ experiences. The theme of *struggling with entrepreneurial leadership* highlights women entrepreneur leaders’ understandings of the process parallels between their understandings in relation to their perceptions of communal expectations for example Natalie’s identification with the need to be caring as a leader and entrepreneur. The women entrepreneur leaders draw reflexively upon entrepreneurship, as entrepreneur, individualising a process, and positioning it as problematic word which they have “bumped into a few times” (Helen). Both Helen and Natalie, fail to identify with the word yet they contradict themselves by, perhaps non-reflexively drawing upon entrepreneurial descriptions of “generate money”, “risk taking” and “spotting opportunities”. Natalie also draws upon a discourse of blending to introduce feminine and communal understandings of entrepreneurship; stating “entrepreneurs really do care about their staff”.

Also Helen's earlier description of a masculine war metaphor to convey her entrepreneurial leadership stating; "if it were an army I would out there at the front with the fastest horse" is also tempered by her identified need to "slightly adjust your approach", drawing upon more communal and feminine behaviours to "get involved" and get people talking to work through solutions together. Sandra also highlight how she is "easy going" denying that she is authoritative "unless [she] has to be".

This highlights the intertextual link between the leadership and entrepreneurial processes. Whilst the women entrepreneur leaders' experiences highlight the contextual adjustment that may be required as they draw upon processes of entrepreneurship or leadership as separate resources to a greater or lesser extent, a process of blending is evident within the lived experiences they shared within this study.

Within the given gender dualism (Mavin, 2009b) recognising and understanding women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of the fluidity of agentic and communal behaviour is difficult. A process of *blending*, therefore, opens up a space from which to disrupt the gender binary and progress understandings of entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective by envisioning women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences anew.

7.9 Highlighting Experiences of Gender in Entrepreneurial Leadership

Discourses are offered to provide an understanding of how women's lives may be shaped without denying diversity of women's subjectivities and recognising contextual sensitivity (Levitt and Hiestand, 2004). FSR places great emphasis upon situated knowledge (Hartsock, 1997; Smith, 1987; Harding, 1991; Collins, 1990; McCorkel and Myers, 2003), therefore, the concern of this thesis is locating experiences of gender within entrepreneurial leadership from women's social location as the 'Other' against a patriarchal backcloth which frames this research. Whilst this study recognises women's individual subjectivities, the need to make sense of commonalities of women's lives (Buzzanell, 2003) is important to enable political action, which is at the heart of a FSR approach (Hekman, 1997a).

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that this thesis acknowledges and has discussed (see section 2.7) the potential criticism of perpetuating the gender binary, as by speaking of gender differences reproduces the gender binary. However, to reject that gender is an issue leaves the gender binary unchallenged (Styhre *et al.*, 2005). This thesis highlights that women entrepreneurs' and their followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership cannot be captured within the gender binary, and recognising gender complexities and tension. Multiple enactments of masculinities and femininities are explored (Mavin and Grandy, 2010) with contradictory discourses offered as alternative discourses to destabilise dominant discourses, challenge the established gender binary and respond to Kelan's (2010) criticism that extant developments on doing gender have perpetuated the binary.

Discourses of *visibility, integrity, acceptance, resistance and authenticity* are offered to progress understandings of gender experiences within entrepreneurial leadership in small firms. The themes from women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of gender within entrepreneurial leadership are drawn together to understand how they have been shaped by discourses identified within this study (See Table 7.9a below) and how the discourses offered shape experiences of gender within entrepreneurial leadership in table 7.9b (see below).

Discourse	Themes of Follower Perceptions	Themes of Women's Experiences
Discourse of Integrity	Trust Tried and tested (she's doing it) Need to be self aware	Values: My one steady rock Embedding values
Discourse of Visibility	Trust Tried and tested (she's doing it) Need to be self aware	Awareness of difference Acceptance and embracing difference Responding to difference Involvement
Discourse of Resistance	Women the same but different	Struggling with entrepreneurial leadership Entrepreneur = men and/or 'celebrity' status
Discourse of Acceptance	Women the same but different Celebrating success	Acceptance and embracing difference Responding to difference Embedding values Involvement
Discourse of Authenticity	Trust Celebrating success	Responding to difference Values: My one steady rock

Table 7.9a Discourses Shaping Follower and Women Entrepreneur Themes

Discourses	How discourses shape women's experiences and follower perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership
Discourse of Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity highlights the importance for women to be aware of and understand their values in order to support and legitimises their decisions and behaviour within the entrepreneurial leadership process • A source for followers to develop and build their trust in their women entrepreneurs
Discourse of Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's visibility provides followers with the opportunity to observe and witness their behaviour a source from which they can develop their trust in their women entrepreneurs • Women's visibility shapes their decisions and behaviour to differentiate themselves positively to exploit their highly visible status
Discourse of Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's resistance to masculine social construction and interpretations of entrepreneurial leadership • Followers' resistance to women's resistance of conforming to their social perceived gender role
Discourse of Acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women accept their difference and use this as a positive differentiating factor within their business • Followers draw upon acceptance to understand their respective woman entrepreneurs for who they are as individuals as a result of their struggle to understand women's behaviour within the gender binary
Discourse of Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values support women's decisions and behaviour to reassure themselves and their followers of their competence in the entrepreneurial leadership process • Need for women to be visible to shape follower's perceptions of women's competence through building trust in the consistency of their behaviour

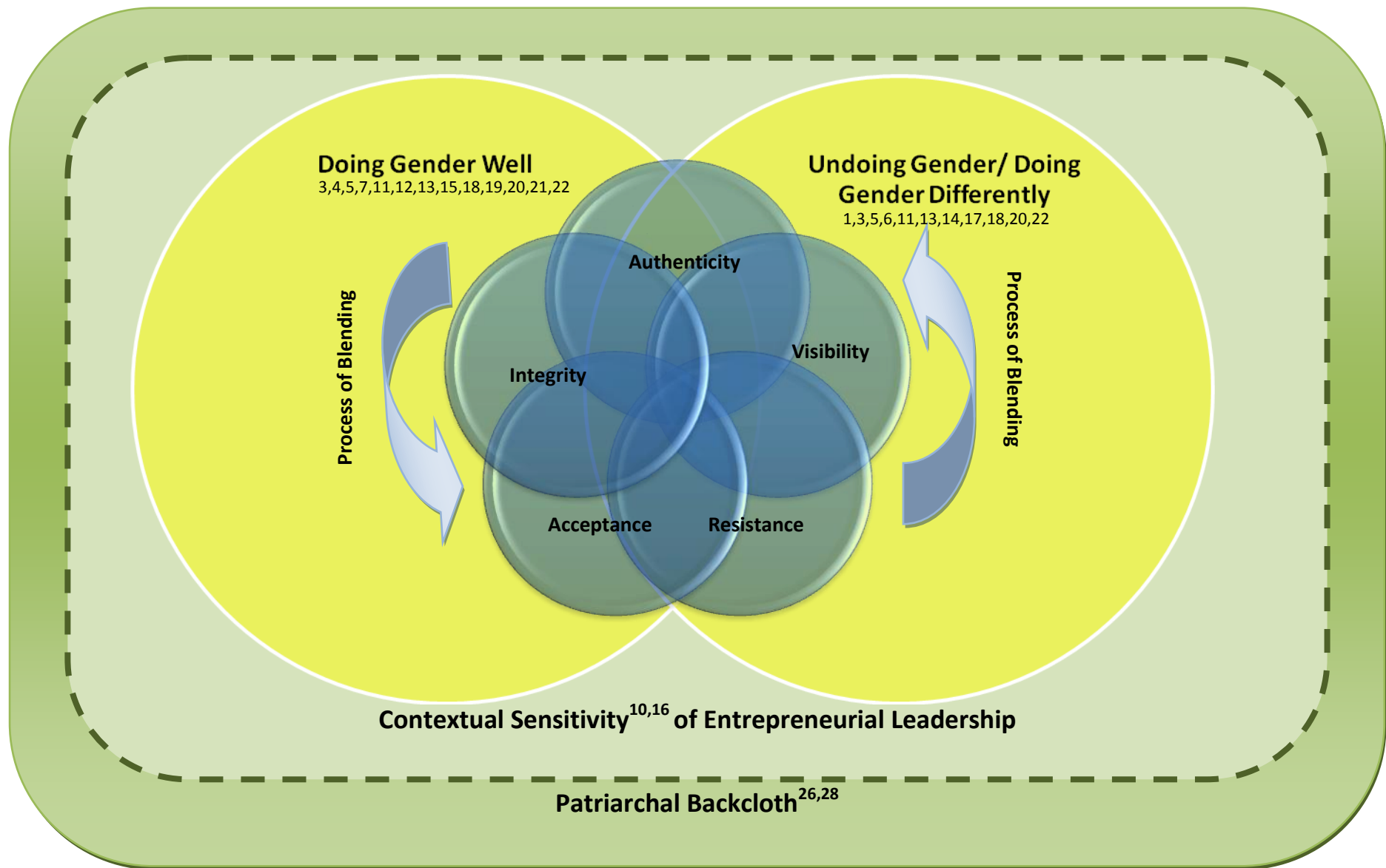
Table 7.9b How Discourses Shape Experiences of Gender within Entrepreneurial Leadership

The discourses are drawn together to offer a framework of gender experiences within a process of entrepreneurial leadership, analysed through an analytical framework developed from the intersection of the gender, women in leadership, female entrepreneurship and authentic leadership theory bases. A process of *blending* is also offered to provide an understanding of the fluidity of discourses to demonstrate how they blur and merge between and within each other over space and time, creating fluid spaces of discourse overlap within which gender complexities in entrepreneurial leadership are surfaced to make an original contribution to the existing theory base.

Discourses of *visibility*, *integrity*, *acceptance*, *resistance* and *authenticity*, are temporal, continuously moving, in a never ending state of flux (Gannon and Davies, 2007) and contextually dependent (Sunderland, 2008) enabling discourses to become more or less dominant across different contexts and areas of time and space. Consequently, the discourses highlighted are not independent, but implicated within and between one another, contouring one another, dependent upon women entrepreneurs' social location. This understanding aligns with the FSR value of all knowledge being socially situated (Hartsock, 1997; Smith, 1987; Harding, 1991; Collins, 1990; McCorkel and Myers, 2003).

The discourses identified against a backcloth of patriarchy, analysed through the analytical framework developed from the intersection of the gender, women in leadership, female entrepreneurship and authentic leadership theory bases provide further understandings of how some discourses may shape women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of gender within a process of entrepreneurial leadership.

A process of *blending* provides an understanding of how discourses shift according to context, resulting in the blurring and merging of discourses causing discursal instability (Sunderland, 2004) also highlights gender complexities. Discursal instability (Sunderland, 2004) is understood to be the dislodging of dominant discourses to enable, at least theoretically, a space to create a new way of seeing and thinking (Fletcher, 1999; Weedon, 1997) enabling contradictions, ambivalence, ambiguity and paradox to surface. As gender complexities are surfaced, dominant discourses are destabilised (Sunderland, 2007) which challenges the gender binary. A process of *blending* occurs across reflexive and non-reflexive space (Martin, 2006; Nencel, 2010) and is represented within the theoretical framework below (see figure 7.9) within the overlaps of the Venn diagram to symbolise the variation and shifts in priority and dominance in relation to context. The framework illustrates how discourses "are complex interconnected webs of modes of being, thinking and acting... in constant flux and often contradictory" (Gannon and Davies, 2007: 82), dependent upon the context, within which, the women entrepreneur leaders and their followers are located.



Alvesson and Due Billing (1997)¹; Avolio *et al.*, (2004)²; Bruni *et al.*, (2004a)³; Eagly, (1987)⁴; Eagly and Carli (2007)⁵; Eagly and Karau (2002)⁶; Eagly *et al.*, (2000)⁷; Erickson (1995)⁸; Gardner *et al.*, (2005)⁹; George *et al.*, (2007)¹⁰; Gherardi (1994)¹¹; Grant (1988)¹²; Hines, (1992)¹³; Kelan (2008¹⁴, 2010¹⁵); Levitt and Hiestand (2004)¹⁶; Lewis (2006¹⁷, 2009¹⁸); Marshall (1993)¹⁹; Martin (2006)²⁰; Mavin and Grandy (2010)²¹; Nencel (2010)²²; Palanski and Yammarino (2009)²³; Roberts *et al.*, (2009)²⁴; Shamir and Eilam (2005)²⁵; Simpson and Lewis (2005)²⁶; Tracy and Trethewey (2005)²⁷; Walby (1989)²⁸

Figure 7.9 Theoretical Framework of this Thesis 297

The theoretical framework (see figure 7.9 above) is offered to make an original contribution to knowledge as a framework of doing gender (well) and undoing gender/ doing gender differently is drawn upon from the existing theory base and then developed to analyse experiences of gender within the entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership fields. This thesis is underpinned with an understanding that patriarchy provides a background to everyday lives and, therefore, provides a backcloth to this study and the foundation of this theoretical framework (Walby, 1989; Simpson and Lewis, 2005). Layered upon a patriarchal backcloth lies the contextual sensitivity of entrepreneurial leadership to highlight the flux between and within contexts. A framework of doing gender (well) and undoing gender/ doing gender differently is positioned upon the 'contextual sensitivity of entrepreneurial leadership' box to illustrate the focus of (un)doing within a specific context. The overlapping circles of doing gender (well) and undoing gender/ doing gender differently highlight the fluidity of gender with the overlapping sections, representing how the women entrepreneurs within the study do gender well and simultaneously do gender differently creating a space from which to unsettle gender binaries (Mavin and Grandy, 2010). This study offers five discourses (authenticity, integrity, acceptance, resistance and visibility) and a process of blending to provide understandings of women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective.

As Sunderland (2007: 209) contends, whether we are (or no)t aware, discourses shape experiences and expectations "at different times and different situations". Within the theoretical framework, discourses of *visibility*, *integrity*, *authenticity*, *acceptance* and *resistance* are continuously moving, in a never ending state of flux. They are outside the bounds of a social hierarchy, enabling discourses to become more or less dominant within different contexts and areas of time and space. Consequently, the discourses highlighted are not independent, but implicated within and between one another, contouring one another, dependent upon context. The lived experiences and indeed the expectations placed upon women entrepreneurs within entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective are filled with ambivalence, contradiction and ambiguity. A process of blending occurs where discourses overlap within and between one another facilitating the emergence of alternative discourses, highlighting gender complexities and supporting understandings of gender that attempt to disrupt the gender binary as it destabilises dominant discourses (Sunderland, 2007).

Taking a FSR has enabled gender complexities and tensions to surface within and between women entrepreneur leaders' and followers' themes of experience allowing alternative forms of knowledge to emerge by challenging or reversing dominant discourses provided by feminist discursive space (Weedon, 1997).

This research makes an original theoretical contribution to entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership by offering insights into some discourses and a process of blending, which shapes women entrepreneurs' and followers experiences of entrepreneurial leadership enabling the complexity within their lived experiences to emerge in order to understand how they conform and simultaneously resist dominant discourses within different contexts.

7.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter offers insights into some discourses which shape women entrepreneurs and followers' experiences of gender within entrepreneurial leadership in this study. In identifying some discourses, the gender complexity of their lived experiences is surfaced to understand how women entrepreneurs conform and simultaneously resist dominant discourses within different contexts to destabilise the gender binary.

The chapter began by outlining the understanding of discourse within this study. Themes of experiences from both women entrepreneurs' and their followers', outlined in Chapter Six, are drawn upon to illustrate how experiences of gender in entrepreneurial leadership have been shaped by discourses. Discourses of *visibility*, *integrity*, *acceptance*, *resistance* and *authenticity* are highlighted as interconnected and linked within a process of *blending* to offer a theoretical framework of entrepreneurial leadership analysed through authentic leadership against a patriarchal backcloth, to provide further understandings of the gender complexities within a process of entrepreneurial leadership and make an original contribution to the existing theory base.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to conclude the thesis, outlining how the research question *“Leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?”*, research aims and objectives have been addressed within the study. The chapter addresses the final research objective which aimed through *‘the development of the thesis, to provide original theoretical and empirical contributions to gender in leadership, gender in entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership from a gender perspective’*.

An overview of the findings is presented, further highlighting the original contributions to knowledge emerging from this study. The research process and consequent decisions are evaluated before areas of future research are outlined.

8.2 Central Arguments and Contributions

Against a patriarchal backcloth and drawing upon authentic leadership, this thesis aimed to bring a gender perspective to the study of entrepreneurial leadership from women entrepreneurs’ and followers’ perspectives. The research aims were to:

- Provide a gender perspective to the study of female entrepreneurship and their followers experiences of entrepreneurial leadership.
- Contribute to emerging entrepreneurial leadership research considering gender, acknowledging follower involvement, individual agency, and recognising entrepreneurial leadership as a social process.
- Contribute further empirical research from a gender perspective of women entrepreneurs to the authentic leadership theory base.

This thesis offers two main contributions to knowledge. Firstly, the study offers a fusion of gender, entrepreneurship and authentic leadership research to conceptualise and empirically explore how gender is experienced from women entrepreneurs' and followers' perspectives to understand how the subjective makes sense of entrepreneurial leadership within the small firm context against a backcloth of patriarchy and contextual sensitivity. Exploring women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of gender through this framework is a sensitising device to the flux and fluidity of doing and undoing of gender providing an opportunity to envision experiences of gender in entrepreneurial leadership anew as it avoids duplicating the gender binary. Secondly, the thesis makes an original theoretical contribution to studies of entrepreneurial leadership by offering insights into some of the discourses which shape women entrepreneurs' and followers' perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership. In highlighting such gender complexities a greater understanding emerges of how women conform and simultaneously resist dominant discourses within different contexts through a process of blending. Further claims of original contributions are highlighted as the accomplishment of each research objective is discussed throughout this section. This section will summarise the accomplishment of each research objective to evaluate the contribution offered by this thesis. Original contributions to knowledge are highlighted in italics throughout this section.

8.2.1 Reviewing the Theory Bases: Gender, Women in Leadership, Female Entrepreneurship and Authentic Leadership

The first objective of this thesis:

- To critically review the gender, entrepreneurship, authentic leadership literatures before merging the three theory bases through which women entrepreneurs' and followers' perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership can be theorised.

Followed by the second research objective:

- To develop a gender lens, against a backcloth of patriarchy, to explore women entrepreneurs and followers perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership to contribute new insights to studies of entrepreneurial leadership.

This section will review the theory bases explored in this thesis to outline how the above research objectives have been achieved whilst also highlighting the original contributions of this study.

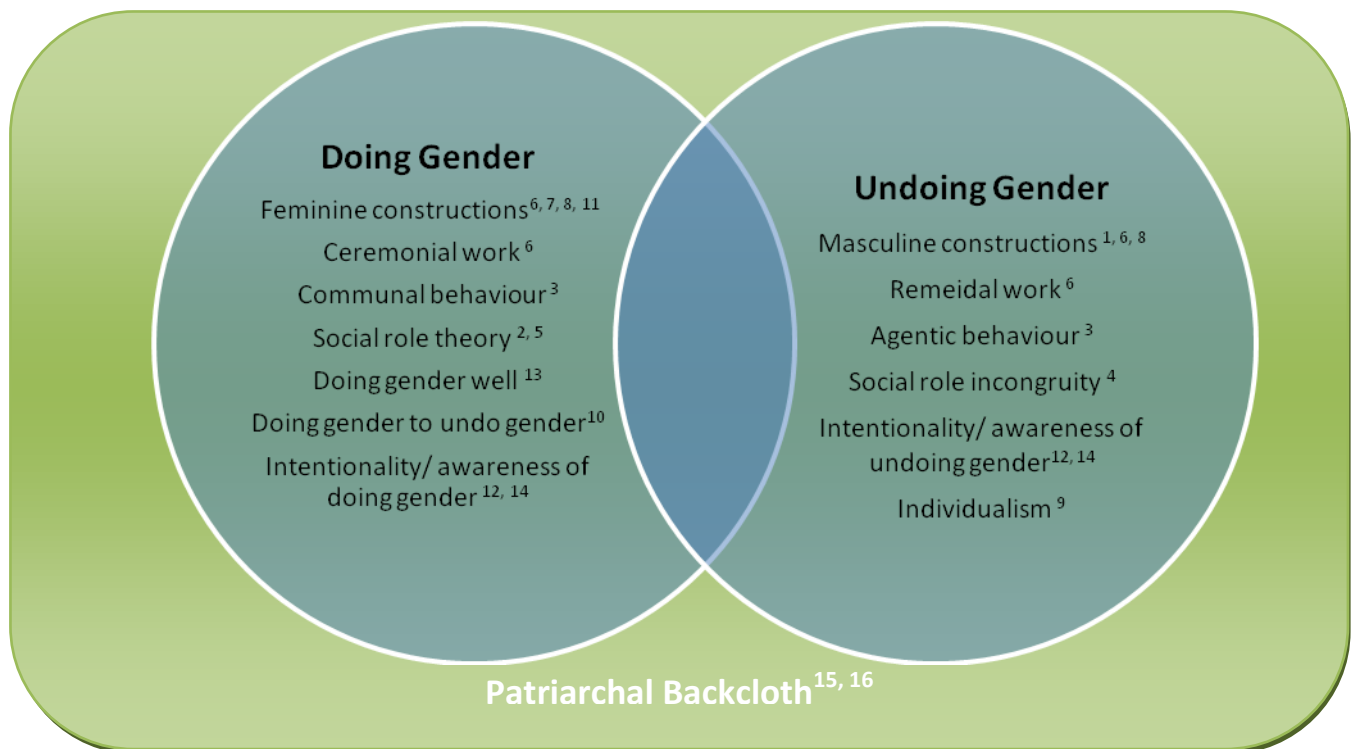
8.2.1.1 Patriarchal Backcloth

As the gender theory base was critically reviewed a backcloth of patriarchy emerged which provided a background to everyday lives, and consequently provided a background to this thesis. Patriarchy was explored and understood to be a “system of social structures, and practices” (Walby, 1989: 214) which create and sustain a “pervasive cultural condition in which women’s lives [are] either misrepresented or not represented at all” (Butler, 1990: 1). Men are positioned as ‘natural’ and ‘legitimate’ figures of authority, which has enabled them to access and maintain positions of power and privilege (Simpson and Lewis, 2005). Women are subordinated to the social category of men, positioned as the norm and ‘One’, with women labelled as the non-norm and the ‘Other’ (Butler, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1953). This societal order was understood to reflect organisational structures with women “discursively characterized as ‘lacking’ in relation to the characteristics required for the professional identity” (Katila and Merilainen, 1999: 165).

Understandings of gender were also explored and understood in this thesis to be socially constructed characteristics of masculinities and femininities (Fonow and Cook, 2005; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; Jackson and Scott, 2002; Lorber and Farrell, 1991; Butler, 1990). It was understood to provide “socially produced distinctions between male and female, masculine and feminine” (Acker, 1992: 250; Simpson and Lewis, 2005; Ahl, 2006).

The patriarchal backcloth and understanding of gender as a research lens was taken forward within the review of female entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership literature. Consequently, this thesis was concerned with how women conformed and resisted (Martin, 2006) social role expectations (Eagly, 1987; Eagly *et al.*, 2000) and how their gender behaviour was interpreted by others through their socially perceived sex category (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010) through a framework of doing and undoing gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Jeanes, 2007; Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009; Messerschmidt, 2009) (see Figure 8.2.1.1). The need to explore whether such gender practices were reflexive or non-reflexive (Martin, 2006;

Czarniskwa, 2006; Nencel, 2010) was required to understand the harmful effects of non reflexive gender practice within everyday interactions (Martin, 2006).



Alvesson and Due Billing (1997)¹; Eagly, (1987)²; Eagly and Carli (2007)³; Eagly and Karau (2002)⁴; Eagly *et al.*, (2000)⁵; Gherardi (1994)⁶; Grant (1988)⁷; Hines, (1992)⁸; Kelan (2008⁹, 2010¹⁰); Marshall (1993)¹¹; Martin (2006)¹²; Mavin and Grandy (2010)¹³; Nencel (2010)¹⁴; Simpson and Lewis (2005)¹⁵; Walby, (1989)¹⁶

Figure 8.2.1.1 Framework for Doing and Undoing

The need to disrupt or dissolve the gender binary (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004) was highlighted. However, the complexity of trying to overcome a gender binary without reproducing it or silencing gender was also outlined (Fournier and Keleman, 2001; Coupland, 2001; Leonard, 2002, Ainsworth, 2002; Styhre *et al.*, 2005). Kelan (2010) criticised extant developments of doing and undoing gender for mapping or remapping against the binary. However, Mavin and Grandy (2010) suggested that exploring simultaneous enactments of masculinities and femininities could unsettle the gender binary over time and progress understandings.

A patriarchal backcloth and understanding of gender provided the foundation of the analytical framework for this thesis which was further developed following the literature reviews in Chapters Three and Four. Against a backcloth of patriarchy this thesis provides a gender perspective to the study of female entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial leadership through interpretation and theorisation of women and their followers experiences which contributes towards addressing the overall research question.

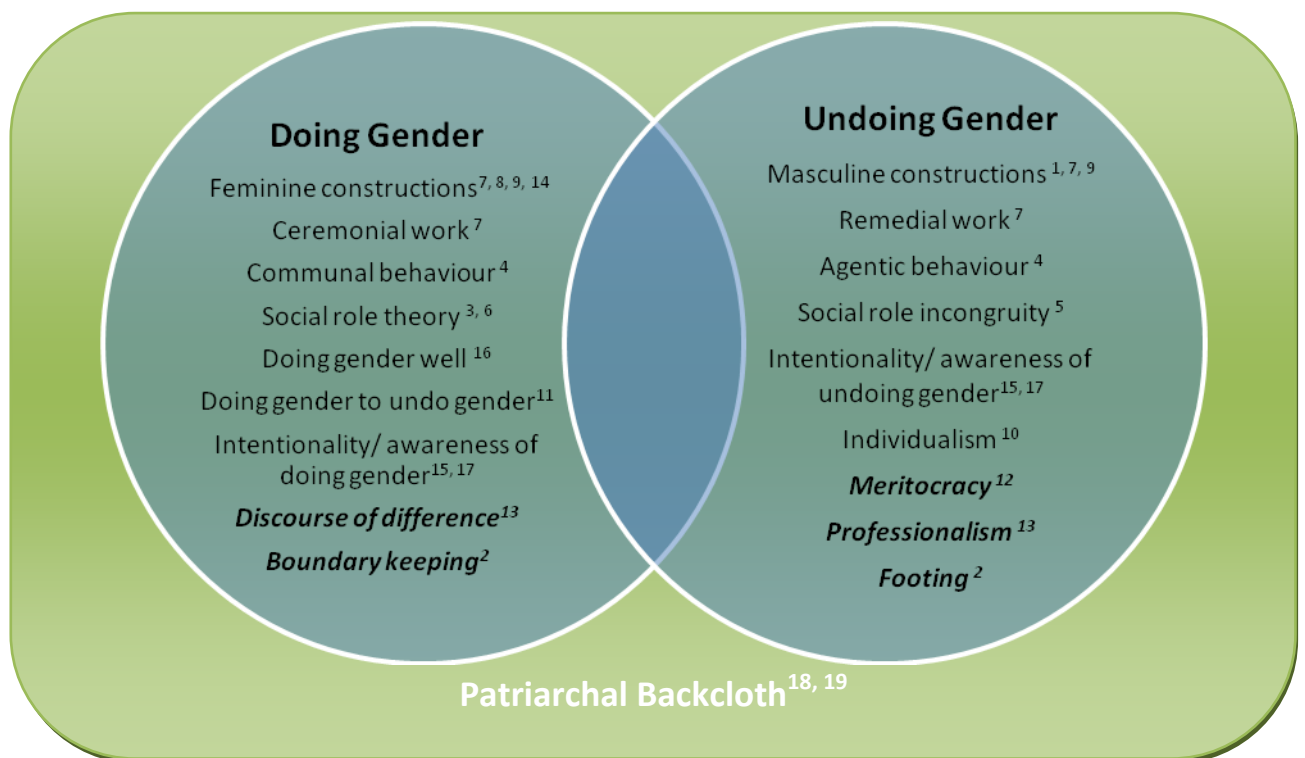
This research offers a gender lens to studies of entrepreneurship, authentic leadership and entrepreneurial leadership through which perspectives of doing and undoing gender against a backcloth of patriarchy within entrepreneurial leadership in a small firm context can be interpreted.

8.2.1.2 Female entrepreneurship

The female entrepreneurship literature was understood and reviewed against a backcloth of patriarchy which highlighted the under researched gendered nature of entrepreneurship (Marlow *et al.*, 2009). The understanding of entrepreneurship as a masculine construction (Mirchandani, 1999; Ahl, 2002; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; b; Lewis, 2006; 2009; Marlow, 2006; Marlow *et al.*, 2009) with an entrepreneur centric focus (Simpson and Lewis, 2005) was taken through the research into the framework for analysis. Gender was viewed to be implicit and intertwined within entrepreneurial leadership (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; b; Ahl, 2006; Lewis 2006; Fenwick, 2002) enabling a gender perspective to be explored within the emerging gender blind entrepreneurial leadership field.

Understandings of meritocracy, processes of boundary keeping and footing and discourses of professionalism and difference (Lewis, 2009) were highlighted as useful in understanding how women entrepreneurs search for situated authenticity and included within the analytical framework (see below Figure 8.2.1.2). Therefore, by:

Exploring studies of entrepreneurship through a gender lens offers a contribution to the field in acknowledging follower involvement and agency in their interpretations of women entrepreneurs doing and undoing of gender within the process of entrepreneurship.



Alvesson and Due Billing (1997)¹; Bruni *et al.*, (2004a)²; Eagly, (1987)³; Eagly and Carli (2007)⁴; Eagly and Karau (2002)⁵; Eagly *et al.*, (2000)⁶; Gherardi (1994)⁷; Grant (1988)⁸; Hines, (1992)⁹; Kelan (2008¹⁰, 2010¹¹); Lewis, (2006¹², 2009¹³); Marshall (1993)¹⁴; Martin (2006)¹⁵; Mavin and Grandy (2010)¹⁶; Nencel (2010)¹⁷ Simpson and Lewis (2005)¹⁸; Walby, (1990)¹⁹

Figure 8.2.1.2 Developing the Analytical Framework

The authentic leadership literature was then reviewed, as discussed below.

8.2.1.3 Authentic Leadership

The authentic leadership framework was drawn upon to explore perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership given Lewis' (2009) assertion of authenticity being useful to explore experiences of gender, and its acknowledgement of follower involvement and agency within leader interpretations. The emerging framework was identified as being empirically under researched, with conceptual developments (with the exception of Eagly (2005)), remaining gender blind, highlighting a potential area for contribution to progress the field from a gender perspective.

Further empirical studies were argued to offer new understandings to progress developments within this field from a gender perspective. In particular, small businesses were positioned as useful sites to begin empirical exploration of authentic leadership due to their simple structures (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Jensen and Luthans, 2006). Therefore, by:

Exploring the emerging concept of authentic leadership through a gender lens offers a contribution to the field by taking a gender perspective of women entrepreneurs to understand follower's interpretations of doing and undoing of gender within authentic leadership process.

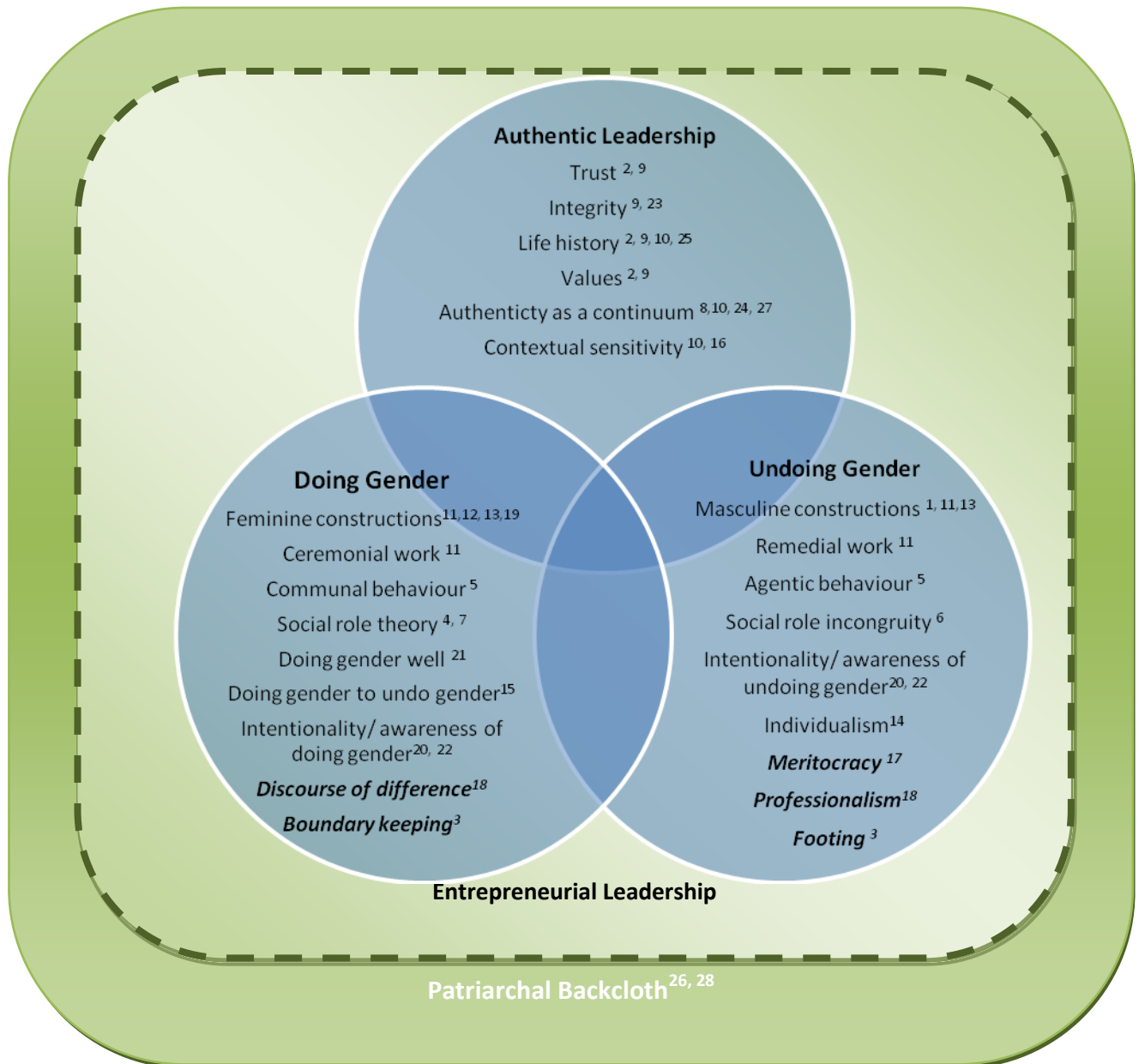
The analytical framework of this thesis was developed through the literature review of the gender, women in leadership, female entrepreneurship and authentic leadership theory bases across Chapters Two, Three and Four. The intersection of gender, women in leadership, female entrepreneurship and authentic leadership research through a gender lens provided the focus of this study to conceptualise and empirically explore the research question which guided this thesis: *'leader and follower perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership: how is gender experienced in small firms?'* (see Figure 8.2.1.3).

Patriarchy provided a backcloth to the analytical framework, framing understandings of entrepreneurship, leadership and entrepreneurial leadership as gendered. A framework of doing and undoing gender was drawn upon as it enabled experiences of gender to be explored within entrepreneurial leadership in small firms, whilst acknowledging individuals' agency and subjectivities in their interpretations of gender behaviour through socially perceived sex categories (Messerschmidt, 2009; Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Exploring experiences of gender in entrepreneurial leadership through a framework of authentic leadership was also considered appropriate for this thesis given the concepts acknowledgement and involvement of followers within the process and was therefore included within the analytical framework (see below Figure 8.2.1.3). This study, therefore;

Offers a fusion of gender, entrepreneurship and authentic leadership research to conceptualise and empirically explore how gender is experienced from women entrepreneurs' and followers' perspectives to understand how the subjective makes sense of entrepreneurial leadership within the small firm context against a backcloth of patriarchy and contextual sensitivity. Exploring women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of gender through this framework is a sensitising device to the flux and fluidity of doing and

undoing of gender providing an opportunity to envision experiences of gender in entrepreneurial leadership anew as it avoids duplicating the gender binary.



Alvesson and Due Billing (1997)¹; Avolio *et al.*, (2004)²; Bruni *et al.*, (2004a)³; Eagly, (1987)⁴; Eagly and Carli (2007)⁵; Eagly and Karau (2002)⁶; Eagly *et al.*, (2000)⁷; Erickson (1995)⁸; Gardner *et al.*, (2005)⁹; George *et al.*, (2007)¹⁰; Gherardi (1994)¹¹; Grant (1988)¹²; Hines, (1992)¹³; Kelan (2008¹⁴, 2010¹⁵); Levitt and Hiestand (2004)¹⁶; Lewis (2006¹⁷, 2009¹⁸); Marshall (1993)¹⁹; Martin (2006)²⁰; Mavin and Grandy (2010)²¹; Nencel (2010)²²; Palanski and Yammarino (2009)²³; Roberts *et al.*, (2009)²⁴; Shamir and Eilam (2005)²⁵; Simpson and Lewis (2005)²⁶; Tracy and Trethewey (2005)²⁷; Walby (1989)²⁸

Figure 8.1.2.3 Analytical Framework for this Thesis

8.2.2 Methodological Design

The third and fourth research objectives of this thesis intended:

- To design an appropriate methodology to explore subjective experiences of women entrepreneurs and followers perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective.
- To gather empirical data of women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership in small businesses.

A paradigm of subjectivism framed this thesis and shaped my feminist research approach. FSR was drawn upon to foreground women's consciousness (Collins, 1997) to create new knowledge towards cultivating social and political change (Crasnow, 2008; Brooks, 2007; Fonow and Cook, 2005; Hurley, 1999). FSR enabled women to speak from their multiple standpoints without preventing women coming together for specific political goals (Hekman, 1997a).

The epistemological aim was to understand the lived experiences of women entrepreneurs and their followers' perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership, to allow both to be grounded socially and culturally, and to construct and reconstruct their subjective realities. Given the FSR approach taken, a central concern of this thesis was to understand how discourses shape our thinking, attitudes and behaviour (Simpson and Lewis, 2007) to understand the "common understandings manifest in language, social practices and structures" (Fletcher 1999: 143) within entrepreneurial leadership.

A case study strategy was taken comprising five case studies of women entrepreneurs with each including a participant follower. Qualitative research methods were conducted including a two stage semi structured interview and research diaries. The research data was interpreted through a gender lens and framework for analysis drawn from key elements of the intersection of the gender, women in leadership, female entrepreneurship and authentic leadership theory bases and the FSR approach.

Discourse analysis combined variation, rhetoric, accountability and stake and interest (Potter, 2004) to surface the complexities (Hearn, 1998) of the entrepreneurial leadership process.

This thesis offers a methodological contribution in fusing a feminist standpoint research approach which places participants' situated knowledge at the heart of the research, a framework of doing and undoing gender along with a framework of discourse ingredients, enables women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of gender in entrepreneurial leadership within a small firm context to be explored.

The study also offers an original, small mixed method approach through five case studies of women entrepreneurs and their followers operating small firms, conducting a two stage semi structured interviews and research diaries which focus upon the relationship.

8.2.3 Experiences of Entrepreneurial Leadership

Experiences of entrepreneurial leadership explored through women entrepreneurs' and followers' perspectives in Chapter Six addressed the following research objectives:

- To offer in-depth interpretations of women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership in small businesses through a gender lens.
- To identify insights from the empirical study of women entrepreneurs experiences and followers perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership which contribute to understandings of entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective.

Chapter Six interpreted and presented the voices of the women entrepreneurs and their followers. The findings were presented within the chapter as themes of women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences. Understanding entrepreneurial leadership as a process with "emergent qualities which cannot be reduced to the independent contributions either of people or contexts" (Hosking and Morley, 1991: 63) acknowledged followers involvement and agency within a complex and reciprocal process.

Participants' situated knowledge (Hartsock, 1997; Smith, 1987; Harding, 1991; Collins, 1990; McCorkel and Myers; 2003) were explored in relation to similarities and differences between and amongst participants' standpoints. Whilst this research took a FSR approach which placed great emphasis on the need to acknowledge differences between and amongst participants, it also recognised that some level of commonality was required in order "to preserve the analytical and political force of feminist theory" (O'Brien Hallstein, 2000: 4).

As Collins (1997) argued, groups share permanence over time resulting in group experiences going beyond any individual ones. Group membership was therefore used as a focal point which acknowledged that individuals will have different experiences and interpretations therefore recognising individuals' agency (Collins, 1997). The themes in Chapter Six (see table 8.2.3) are offered to allow readers to explore differences and similarities of group membership (Collins, 1997) as participants constructed and reconstructed their subjective realities.

Exploring women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership against a patriarchal backcloth and drawing upon authentic leadership from a gender perspective, the thesis makes an original empirical and theoretical contribution to the study of female entrepreneurship. Contributing empirically to both the emerging entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership theory bases, responding to calls from both fields for further study (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010; Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Jones and Crompton, 2008; Jenson and Luthans, 2006) and more specifically to the need to explore authentic leadership from a gender perspective (Eagly, 2005) and the need identified within this thesis to also explore entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective. Consequently:

This thesis provides in-depth interpretations of women entrepreneurs' and followers' perspectives of entrepreneurial leadership through a gender lens which is under-researched, therefore this research makes an original empirical contribution to the entrepreneurial leadership theory base.

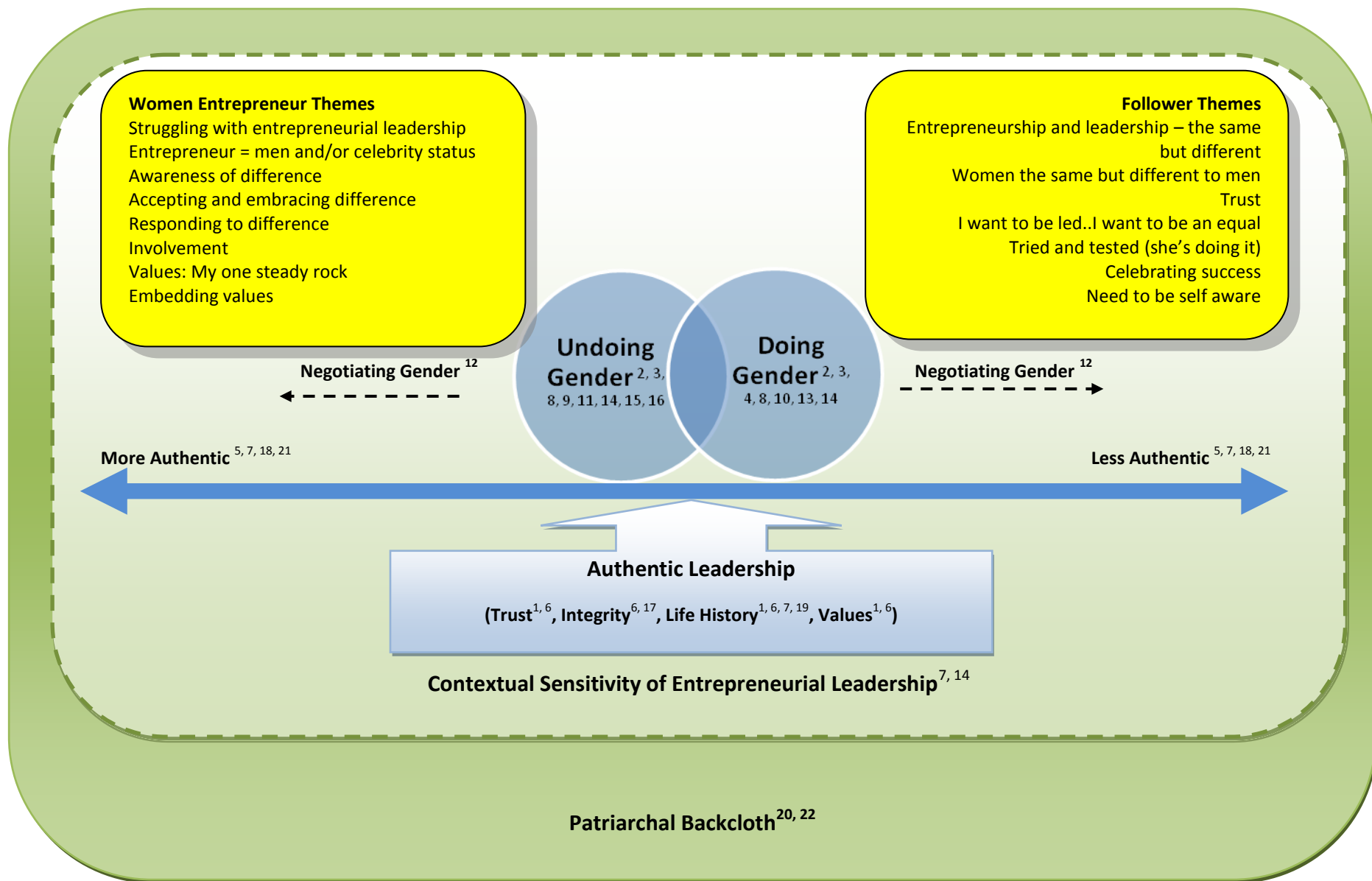
The intersection of processes of the gender, entrepreneurship and authentic leadership literatures against a patriarchal background brought together an understanding of their intertwined nature. Understanding gender as a social construction (Fonow and Cook, 2005; Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; Jackson and Scott, 2002; Lorber and Farrell, 1991; Butler, 1990), and entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership's acknowledgement of follower involvement and individual agency highlighted the conceptual overlaps and appropriateness in fusing these three areas. Consequently this fusion has enabled further insights into leadership experiences of women entrepreneurs offering themes of women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences to entrepreneurial leadership theory base.

Themes of Follower Perceptions	Themes of Women's Experiences
Entrepreneurship and leadership the same but different	Struggling with entrepreneurial leadership
Women the same but different	Entrepreneur = men and/or 'celebrity' status
Trust	Contextual adjustment
I want to be led...I want to be an equal	Awareness of difference
Tried and tested (she's doing it)	Acceptance and embracing difference
Celebrating success	Responding to difference
Need to be self aware	Involvement
	Values: My one steady rock
	Embedding values

Table 8.2.3 Women Entrepreneurs' and Follower Experiences of Entrepreneurial Leadership

Theorised against a backcloth of patriarchy through the analytical framework, themes of women's experiences and follower perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership surfaced the complexities of experiences of gender across participant voices (see Figure 8.2.3).

This research offers themes as an approach to presenting women entrepreneurs' and followers' subjective voices, highlighting the gender complexities and tensions within entrepreneurial leadership in a small firm context.



Avolio *et al.*, (2004)¹; Bruni *et al.*, (2004a)²; Eagly and Carli (2007)³; Eagly and Karau (2002)⁴; Erickson (1995)⁵; Gardner *et al.*, (2005)⁶; George *et al.*, (2007)⁷; Gherardi (1994)⁸; Grandy and Mavin (2010)⁹; Kelan (2008¹⁰, 2010¹¹); Levit and Hiestand (2004)¹²; Lewis (2006¹³, 2009¹⁴); Martin (2006)¹⁵; Nencel (2010)¹⁶; Palanski and Yammarino (2009)¹⁷; Roberts *et al.*, (2009)¹⁸; Shamir and Eilam (2005)¹⁹; Simpson and Lewis (2005)²⁰; Tracy and Trethewey (2005)²¹; Walby (1989)²²

Figure 8.2.3 Thesis Framework

Chapter Six argued that as women and followers voiced the complexities of their lived experiences, discourses which construct a social arena from which common understandings of how women are expected to behave within a context of entrepreneurial leadership (against a backcloth of patriarchy) are “manifest through language, social practices and structures” (Fletcher, 1999: 143). Discourses shape their lived experiences in relation to how they comply or resist their socially perceived gender category, (un)doing gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Deutsch, 2007; Jeanes, 2007). These discourses were taken forward into Chapter Seven to explore how they shape women’s experiences and followers’ perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership

8.2.4 Discourses Shaping Experiences of Entrepreneurial Leadership

Discourses shaping women’s experiences and follower perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership offered in Chapter Seven address the following research objectives:

- To identify how women entrepreneurs and followers engage with discourses and interpret how these discourses shape entrepreneurial leadership experiences from a gender perspective
- To make an original theoretical contribution by offering a gender lens as a theoretical lens through which experiences of doing and undoing gender can be drawn upon as an appropriate framework to analyse experiences of gender within entrepreneurship, authentic leadership and entrepreneurial leadership studies.

Discourses of *visibility*, *integrity*, *acceptance*, *resistance* and *authenticity* are offered to progress understandings of entrepreneurial leadership. Table 8.2.4a outlines how themes of follower perceptions and themes of women’s experiences were shaped by discourses.

Discourse	Themes of Follower Perceptions	Themes of Women's Experiences
Discourse of Integrity	Trust Tried and tested (she's doing it) Need to be self aware	Values: My one steady rock Embedding values Contextual adjustment
Discourse of Acceptance	Women the same but different Celebrating success	Acceptance and embracing difference Responding to difference
Discourse of Resistance	Women the same but different Entrepreneurship and leadership the same but different	Struggling with entrepreneurial leadership Entrepreneur = men and/or 'celebrity' status
Discourse of Visibility	Trust Tried and tested (she's doing it) Need to be self aware	Awareness of difference Acceptance and embracing difference Responding to difference
Discourse of Authenticity	Trust Celebrating success	Responding to difference Involvement Values: My one steady rock

Table 8.2.4a Discourses shaping follower and women entrepreneurs' themes

Some of the themes spanned across more than one discourse brings to the fore the intertwined nature and *blending* process which occurs across discourses, highlighting the richness and complexity of women's lived experiences of entrepreneurial leadership which requires them to cross symbolic borders to acknowledge equality without denying diversity (Gherardi, 1994). Table 8.2.4b below outlines how discourses shape women entrepreneurs' and followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership.

This research makes an original theoretical contribution to studies of entrepreneurial leadership by offering insights into how women entrepreneurs and followers engage with discourses which shape their experiences of entrepreneurial leadership. Further, by highlighting gender complexities within their lived experiences to understand how they conform and simultaneously resist dominant discourses within different contexts to disrupt the gender binary.

Discourses	How discourses shape women's experiences and follower perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership
Discourse of Integrity	Integrity highlights the importance for women to be aware of and understand their values in order to support and legitimises their decisions and behaviour within the entrepreneurial leadership process A source for followers to develop and build their trust in their women entrepreneurs
Discourse of Visibility	Women's visibility provides followers with the opportunity to observe and witness their behaviour a source from which they can develop their trust in their women entrepreneurs Women's visibility shapes their decisions and behaviour to differentiate themselves positively to exploit their highly visible status
Discourse of Resistance	Women's resistance to masculine social construction and interpretations of entrepreneurial leadership Followers' resistance to women's resistance of conforming to their social perceived gender role
Discourse of Acceptance	Women accept their difference and use this as a positive differentiating factor within their business Followers draw upon acceptance to understand their respective woman entrepreneurs for who they are as individuals as a result of their struggle to understand women's behaviour within the gender binary
Discourse of Authenticity	Values support women's decisions and behaviour to reassure themselves and their followers of their competence in the entrepreneurial leadership process Need for women to be visible to shape follower's perceptions of women's competence through building trust in the consistency of their behaviour

Table 8.2.4b How Discourses Shape Experiences of Gender within Entrepreneurial Leadership

As Sunderland (2007: 209) contends, whether we are (or are not) aware, discourses shape experiences and expectations “at different times and different situations”. The framework outlined below (see figure 8.2.4) acknowledges the contextual nature of discourses (Sunderland, 2007), which provides the backdrop to women entrepreneur leaders’ experiences and followers’ expectations of entrepreneurial leadership. The *blending* process challenges the gender dualism by blurring spaces of masculinities and femininities enabling multiple and simultaneous enactments of masculinities and femininities which challenge gender binaries (Mavin and Grandy, 2010).

Discourses of *visibility, integrity, acceptance, resistance* and *authenticity*, are temporal, continuously moving, in a never ending state of flux enabling discourses to become more or less dominant within different contexts and areas of time and space. Consequently, the discourses highlighted are not independent, but implicated within and between one another, contouring one another, dependent upon context and the extent of reflexive and non-reflexive engagement.

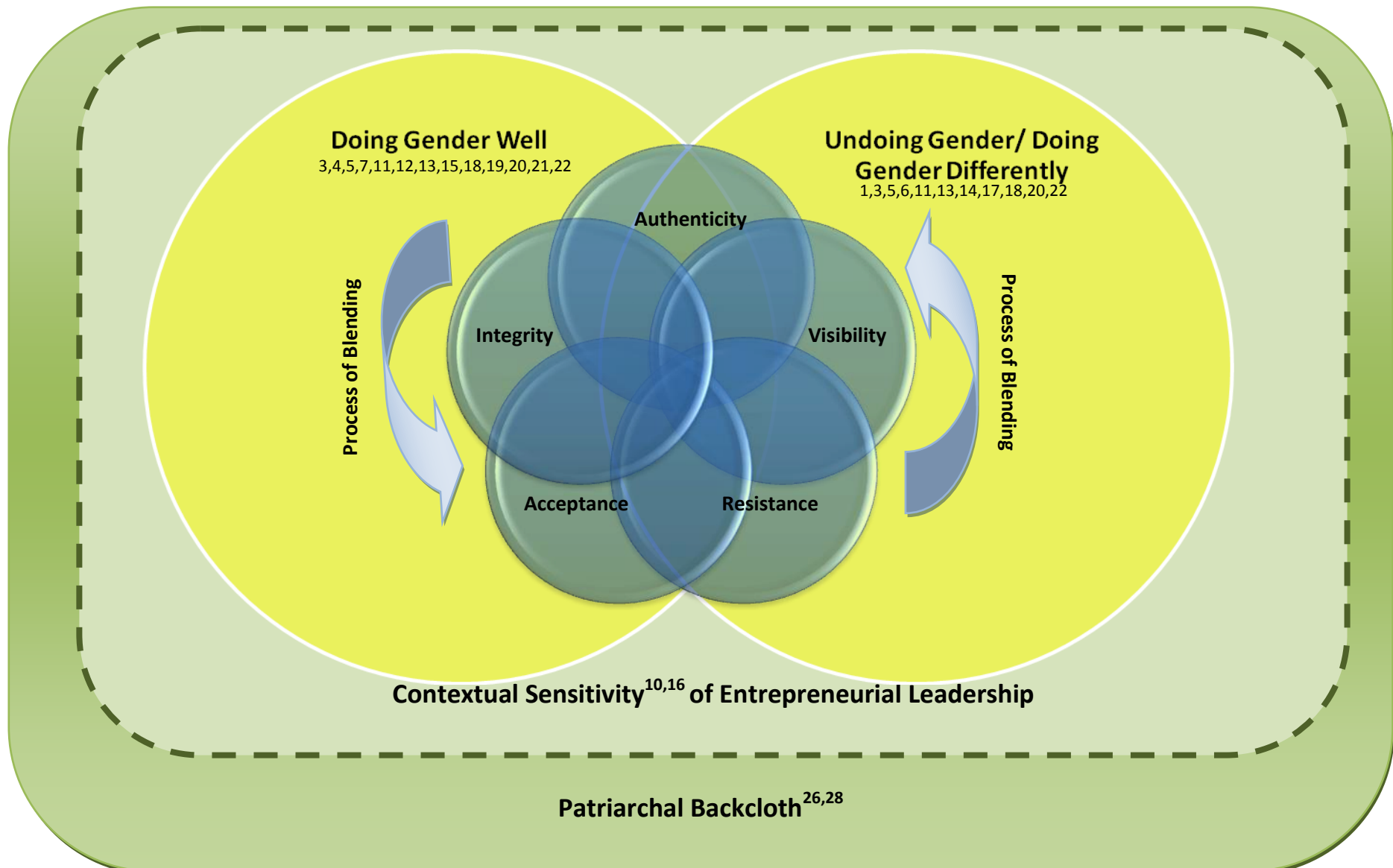
The discourses identified against a backcloth of patriarchy, analysed through understandings of authentic leadership, shape experiences and shift perceptions according to context, resulting in the blurring and merging of discourses causing discursial instability (Sunderland, 2004). Discursial instability (Sunderland, 2004) is understood to be the dislodging of dominant discourses to enable, at least theoretically, a space to create a new way of seeing and thinking (Fletcher, 1999; Weedon, 1997) enabling contradictions, ambivalence, ambiguity and paradox to surface. The theoretical framework constructed for this thesis illustrates how discourses “are complex interconnected webs of modes of being, thinking and acting... in constant flux and often contradictory” (Gannon and Davies, 2007: 82), dependent upon the context within which the women entrepreneurs and their followers are located. Discourses which are contradictory and overlap through the blending process facilitate the emergence of alternative discourses which serve as progressive resources in disrupting the gender binary as it destabilises dominant discourses (Sunderland, 2007).

This thesis makes an original theoretical contribution by offering a gender lens as a theoretical lens through which experiences of doing and undoing gender can be drawn upon as an appropriate framework to analyse experiences of gender within entrepreneurship, authentic leadership and entrepreneurial leadership studies.

A further contribution is made by:

Highlighting the temporal and fluxing nature of the discourses through a process of blending which shape women entrepreneurs and followers experiences of entrepreneurial leadership.

The next section moves to review the evaluative framework of this thesis.



Alvesson and Due Billing (1997)¹; Avolio *et al.*, (2004)²; Bruni *et al.*, (2004a)³; Eagly, (1987)⁴; Eagly and Carli (2007)⁵; Eagly and Karau (2002)⁶; Eagly *et al.*, (2000)⁷; Erickson (1995)⁸; Gardner *et al.*, (2005)⁹; George *et al.*, (2007)¹⁰; Gherardi (1994)¹¹; Grant (1988)¹²; Hines, (1992)¹³; Kelan (2008¹⁴, 2010¹⁵); Levitt and Hiestand (2004)¹⁶; Lewis (2006¹⁷, 2009¹⁸); Marshall (1993)¹⁹; Martin (2006)²⁰; Mavin and Grandy (2010)²¹; Nencel (2010)²²; Palanski and Yammarino (2009)²³; Roberts *et al.*, (2009)²⁴; Shamir and Eilam (2005)²⁵; Simpson and Lewis (2005)²⁶; Tracy and Trethewey (2005)²⁷; Walby (1989)²⁸

Figure 8.2.4 Theoretical Framework of this Thesis

8.3 Evaluative Framework

The assessment and evaluation of research validity is rooted within a positivist paradigm concerned with objective reality (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) along with a search for *the* truth. However, evaluative criteria, in some form, is important for both quantitative and qualitative research (Polkinghorne, 2007). Drawing upon the notion of evaluative criteria enables an understanding of the underlying assumptions which frame the study (Johnson *et al.*, 2006) and reflect the knowledge claims made (Elliott, 2005). Evaluative criteria within this study is particularly appropriate for the FSR approach taken, as Ramazanoglu and Holland (2004: 135) argue that “defenders of standpoint feminism have insisted that feminist knowledge should not be conceived as truths that neutrally mirror reality”. However, feminists still wish to claim that “some accounts of gender are better than others” through reflexive engagement of the conditions of production of such knowledge claims (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2004: 135).

This section will discuss the criteria against which this research will be assessed, sensitive to the subjectivist paradigm and FSR approach of this thesis. The FSR approach taken within this thesis, contends that all knowledge is socially situated (Hartsock, 1997; Smith, 1987; Harding, 1991; Collins, 1990; McCorkel and Myers, 2003), and that there can never be one, objective truth or knowledge claim (McCorkel and Myers, 2003), therefore truth is understood to be emergent in nature, dependent upon social, cultural and historical conditions of women's lived experiences. Consequently, it is therefore inappropriate to seek to make true or false judgements (Hosking and Fineman, 1990). Consideration of the “acceptability of a description may be a more appropriate and useful criterion” (Hosking and Fineman, 1990: 584) given the FSR approach. Interpretations should therefore be assessed in relation to the trustworthiness and plausibility of a researcher's claims, for example consideration of the evidence presented to convince the reader that the research participant orientates to what is claimed (Potter, 2004).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer a framework for the evaluation for interpretative studies which enables researchers to establish trustworthiness within their approach through elements of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Through the trustworthiness framework offered by Lincoln and Guba (1985) I will persuade readers that the research findings and consequent contribution of this thesis are “worth taking account of” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 290).

The sections that follow will review the study in relation to evaluative criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and reflexivity.

8.3.1 Credibility

The credibility of the research approach in relation to representation of research participants' voices and my interpretations as the researcher can be supported through formal and informal member checking (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This was operationalised within the research process by providing research participants with the opportunity to review and comment upon their interview data and consequent interpretations. Engaging in such a process enables participants to identify with the representations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of their lived experiences, which is at the heart of FSR approach (Brooks, 2007) and thereby satisfy the reader of the study's credibility (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Further strategies taken within the study which support claims of credibility were digital recordings and transcription of interview data verbatim to ensure that I was not making any authorial choices or interpretations at the data collection stage.

A key practice in gaining credibility within research is peer debriefing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Peer debriefing is understood to be a practice of transparently sharing a research approach and interpretations with individuals who have an in-depth understanding of the subject and/or methodological approach taken. Peers critique through probing questions to challenge research decisions for the researcher to consider, discuss or defend the research choices made.

Throughout the study I engaged with the peer debriefing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) process to support the credibility criteria of trustworthiness. I have written and presented papers at internal and external conferences to gain feedback from the research community on my approach and interpretations. External conferences were the British Academy of Management, University Forum for Human Resource Development (at both conferences I have presented twice), the Northern Leadership Academy Doctoral Conference and Gender, Work and Organisation.

Given that my study explores the intersection of gender, women in leadership, female entrepreneurship and authentic leadership, I chose to present my research across gender, small business and entrepreneurship and leadership tracks and streams to ensure I gauged feedback from the various subject audiences. The various audiences provided me with feedback and comments which have guided and shaped the development of the study. In particular common questions from the small business and entrepreneurship tracks centred upon how I identified and negotiated access with my participants. In the gender tracks defending how my research was feminist research helped to clarify the values and research assumptions that I brought to the research which supported the theorisation of my thesis and highlighted the need to be transparent in relation to how I designed and approached the data collection and analysis. Taking a reflexive stance with participants and my research community enabled me to establish myself as credible and contributed to the trustworthiness of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

8.3.2 Transferability

Whilst this research acknowledges that the social and contextual nature of the study means that transferability in its literal sense is not possible (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), this thesis understands that the *reader* should assess the transferability of the research. Transferability can be enhanced through readers' resonance with interpretations to support their understandings of women's concrete experiences (Collins, 1990) aligned with the values of FSR. This can be achieved by providing "detailed evidence that the participants in the interaction orient to what is claimed" (Potter, 2004: 617; Lincoln and Guba, 1985) to allow the reader to decide whether the evidence offered within this study is transferrable to support understandings of the same issues within a different context (Elliott, 2005).

As outlined in Chapter One, this research was influenced by my need to make sense of my personal, educational and work experiences, therefore, given the personal motivation and political goals in taking an FSR approach in this study I have drawn upon my research experiences and integrated my findings within my undergraduate, postgraduate and corporate teaching. I have delivered guest lectures on my research to the MBA and BA (Hons) Corporate Management programmes but I also integrate the concepts and ideas within classroom discussions particularly to challenge students' perspectives of gender by relating examples in the media and also in career development modules to highlight entrepreneurship as a viable career option for undergraduates. In doing so I feel able to challenge assumptions to support other students in making sense of their personal, educational, work experiences and any frustrations they may be feeling. I was also asked to present my research at a regional women entrepreneurs mentoring network conference and sit on a panel of experts for a women entrepreneurs regional networking event where I was able to share my research with the female entrepreneurship community I was researching.

8.3.3 Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability are understood to be intertwined processes (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), concerned with providing an "inquiry audit", to assess the "fairness of representation" within the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 317-318). Dependability is primarily concerned with providing the reader with a detailed outline of the research decisions made throughout the design and data collection process. Confirmability is concerned with the transparency of how the choices were made during the research process either methodologically or through interpretations. Consequently, detailed accounts of how the data was collected, interpreted and the research choices made throughout the research should be provided for the reader (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Here I provide an account of my research decision not to present follower voices alongside the voices of their respective women entrepreneurs. It had been the intention within the research design to present women and follower voices alongside each other to enable the analysis of their different interpretations of similar events, interactions and behaviours from a gender perspective. However, during the first stage of follower interviews I was surprised at their willingness to share and disclose, without prompt, 'sensitive' issues relating to the women and the organisation, their personal opinions and intentions. As I began to analyse followers' first stage interviews I felt uneasy with the sensitive nature of some of the experiences and stories they shared with me. Whilst I had been clear within my ethical forms that raw extracts may be shared amongst the research participants my discomfort with the sensitivity of the data collected led me to ask all respondents if they would feel comfortable if their respective women entrepreneur or follower could see their transcript to provide reassurances that linking the data would be acceptable. All of the respondents said that they would have no objections to allow the other person to view their transcript with the exception of Follower 1:

I certainly...don't mind she because. You know, I don't mind if she, if, or if you insist her to see you know but it would be kind of more to no, you know. And the reason being I've been very frank you know and I don't want to kind of upset people for no reason you know. Probably I would be more diplomatic and tactical if I want to say exactly the same things to [woman entrepreneur's name]. Although I would put my point to her.

The hesitation in Follower 1's response supported my decision not to re-present follower and women's voices alongside one another. However this surfaced ethical dilemmas as to how I would then handle the data. Supported by my supervision team I outlined the options available to handle the data in relation to omitting follower voices from the study to avoid the potential of any harm to respondents or re-present follower voices within a separate section to provide a general understanding of follower perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership ensuring that the data extracts could not identify or link the followers to their respective woman entrepreneur. Given my FSR approach I felt the first option to completely omit follower voices from the study would be unethical; as I had collected the data I would be making an authorial choice to silence their situated knowledge. Consequently, I decided to re-present follower voices in a separate section to provide the reader with general understandings of followers' experiences of entrepreneurial leadership from a gender perspective.

To ensure complete anonymity no bio data was included or attempt to carve an identity for the followers was made. Also I was careful not to include data extracts which discussed similar events or incidents as the women entrepreneurs. Whilst this was frustrating in terms of losing the potential richness of the data analysis and interpretations it was a decision that ethically I felt most comfortable with.

Further actions taken within the study to ensure dependability and confirmability were: sharing the research decisions with research participants throughout the study, offering raw data transcripts and consequent interpretations to participants for member checking (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), transparently describing the methodological decisions made within Chapter Five. A step-by-step outline of the data analysis process is provided through my Authorial Strategy illustrating how data was analysed within Chapter Five to support readers in making the connection between raw data and my interpretations.

8.3.4 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a process of “thinking through what one is doing to encourage insights about the nature of social science” (Alvesson *et al.*, 2008: 497), a key element of establishing trustworthiness within research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Reflexivity within FSR is central as researchers are encouraged to consider their own situated knowledge (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007; Naples, 2007) and positionality (McCorkel and Myers, 2003; Hesse Biber, 2007). Consequently, I must subject myself to the “same level of scrutiny” that I direct to my research participants (McCorkel and Myers, 2003: 203) by making my ‘backstage’ assumptions, motivations, narratives and relations transparent (McCorkel and Myers, 2003) to understand the “cultural baggage” I bring to the research (Limerick and O’Leary, 2006: 100) and how this has shaped the methodological design and choices. Engaging in such practice supports the dependability and confirmability criteria by providing further insights into why I made specific decisions from an epistemic and methodological perspective (Johnson and Duberley, 2003). As Hartsock (1997) asserts, we must remain mindful of categories that first come into our thoughts, as they are generally those of the dominant group. Furthermore, reflexivity is imperative from a gender perspective as non-reflexivity is harmful for women in terms of exclusion, exhaustion and being cast as different because individuals are not aware of the gender in their action (Martin, 2006, Nencel, 2010).

In the sections that follow I provide a reflexive account of my epistemic orientation and methodological choices.

8.3.4.1 *Epistemic Reflexivity*

Within epistemic reflexivity (Johnson and Duberley, 2003) I focus upon my positionality (McCorkel and Myers, 2003; Hesse Biber, 2007) to understand how my situated knowledge has shaped this research account.

In Chapter One I provided an outline of how my own lived experiences (personal, educational and work) led me to explore this topic area and I will now share my reflexive account of how my values, beliefs and understandings have been shaped and developed by embarking on this research journey.

As an early woman academic researcher, finding my feminist place was not without some personal discomfort and questioning of my values. Despite the fact I was sensitised to society's patriarchal construction of feminism and its inherent need to ostracise it, I was also mindful as a young woman at the beginning of my academic research career of the challenges and negative connotations I could be confronted with (Hooks, 1984; Bryans and Mavin, 2003). My main concerns were how I would be perceived when making such a public commitment; how would I manage criticism as an early academic researcher; how could I potentially become marginalised from the academy before my research career had begun? Hooks (1984) asserts that women fear the word feminism because they do not wish to publically associate themselves with a political movement deemed to be so radical (Bryans and Mavin, 2003, Crotty, 1998. I reflected upon Hooks' (1984) assertion and considered whether this could explain my initial resistance to the term.

Whilst I understood and agreed with feminist beliefs I continually struggled with preconceived notions of feminism (lesbianism, unattractiveness, unsuccessful, bitterness (Nicolson, 1996: 23)), with images of 'bra burning' radical feminists at the fore, serving only to vilify feminism (Nicolson, 1996). Consequently, when I began this research I did not label myself a feminist but rather an advocate of feminism (Hooks, 1984). Advocating feminism allowed me to locate myself within a place which was comfortable, aligning myself with feminist beliefs without labelling myself a feminist.

I ‘tested’ out my feminist approach in my research within informal research conversations with Doctoral students and academics. Some illustrative responses and comments I received from both women and men were *“But you don’t seem like an angry woman”, “Don’t be getting on your feminist soapbox now”, “But you’re a nice girl”* and *“How can you be a feminist? You wear make up!”*.

As I explored feminism and gender in greater depth and my – initially naive – understanding of feminism developed and my perspective changed. I explored the myriad of feminisms (Crotty, 1998) and the narrow stereotypical understandings (Nicolson, 1996: 23) that others held which are reflected in the comments above, before finding a feminist place which I felt comfortable with. My dissatisfaction with the negative connotations of feminism became the impetus for me to pursue feminist research in order to share my new understanding of feminism with others.

I identified with the FSR approach in terms of its understanding of situated knowledge (Hartsock, 1997; Smith, 1987; Harding, 1991; Collins, 1990; McCorkel and Myers, 2003) and the value I place upon subjectivities. This allowed me to embark on my own sense making journey in relation to my personal, educational and work frustrations outlined in Chapter One, and the political need to share understandings of feminism to move beyond stereotypical understandings of angry bra burning feminists (Hooks, 1984).

Actions taken within this study to address elements of FSR are detailed within Table 8.3.4.1 below.

FSR Dimension		Action taken within the study
Positionality (McCorkel and Myers, 2003)	All knowledge is socially situated (Hartsock, 1997; Smith, 1987; Harding, 1991; Collins, 1990; McCorkel and Myers; 2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I introduced this study by sharing my personal, educational and work experiences which led me to this research to enable the reader to understand my 'backstage' (McCorkel and Myers, 2003) • An outline of the women's back story was offered in Chapter Five to provide readers with an understanding of the women's life histories without too much information that may identify participants • A life history approach was taken in the first stage interview process with the women, allowing them to (re)construct their experiences • Differences between and across women's voices highlight and surfaced through lived experiences • I engage in epistemic and methodological reflexivity to understand my feminist location and the research choices I made
	Strong Reflexivity (Harding, 2007b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparently conveyed how data was analysed within section 5.7 providing an understanding of how knowledge was produced within this study • Provided justification for method selection in section 5.6 • Methodological reflexivity (see section 8.3.4.2) and ethical implications (5.9) of the study were discussed in relation to power differentials between research participants and myself • Areas for future research have been outlined in section 8.5
Political Activism		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing my interpretations with research participants • Delivered presentations based on my research to two groups of women and men entrepreneurs from the North East • Disseminate my research findings at academic conferences (British Academy of Management, University Forum for Human Resource Development, Northern Leadership Academy Doctoral Conference) • Delivered guest lectures based upon my research with the BA(Hons) Corporate Management Programme and MBA Programme • Draw upon my research findings within my undergraduate teaching • Part of a panel of experts for a regional women entrepreneurs networking event <p><i>Future Plan for Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate research findings across regional women's networking organisations to lead to national networks • Publish my work within leading academic journals • Integrate my research findings within the development and delivery of future Executive and Corporate programmes • Continue to share my research approach and experiences within the Doctoral community

Table 8.3.4.1 Evaluation of FSR elements met within the study

8.3.4.2 Methodological Reflexivity

Methodological reflexivity assesses the more technical aspects of a methodology (Johnson and Duberley, 2003) to transparently convey “what happens in research” (Alvesson *et al.*, 2008) to the reader in terms of *how* and *why* research decisions were taken and thereby establish trustworthiness. Furthermore, “self reflection and the critical self-analysis of feelings are an important part of the research process” (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000) particularly within FSR as they are shaped by cultural expectations and norms. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) suggest researchers should listen to their feelings, particularly during the data collection and interpretation stages, and encourage them to process their thoughts and feelings. This is of particular importance for FSR as often the first ideas which enter our consciousness are generally those of the dominant group (Hartsock, 1997).

Methodological reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process in the form of a reflexive journal, recorded in both electronic and paper form, providing an ongoing account of my thoughts and feelings relating to my research experiences (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). However, I feel the more recent extracts which reflect upon the process over some time provide the most insightful reflections. In the below extract from my research diary I reflect back upon the data collection process once all of the data has been collected and I begin the ‘writing down’ stage of the thesis:

As I to-and-fro between my literature and analysis and look back through my interview guides, I can see how my understanding of gender has developed in relation to perpetuating gender binaries and gender complexities and tensions. I realise how I have perpetuated the binary in asking my participants to compare and draw parallels between men and women in questions such as ‘what does having a woman boss mean to you?’. Upon reflection I wish I had not asked such questions, but, I feel ethically it would contravene my FSR approach to silence my participants responses therefore I will need to acknowledge this within the write up of my analysis.

I acknowledge my error in perpetuating gender binaries; however, my trustworthiness develops through my openness and transparency of my mistake. Also, the PhD is a process of research training and personal development as an early career researcher. My subject and methodological knowledge has developed immensely in the past three and a half years, therefore, reflecting and learning from aspects of the study that did not go as well as hoped I feel is just as valuable.

I will share a further reflection from my diary as I began to write up the data analysis chapters of the thesis:

I am disappointed with the lack of richness from the research diary data. The followers' diaries in particular are pretty poor with content generally focusing upon brief descriptions of daily activities and tasks. Even though I did provide guidelines and checked back with participants to see how they were getting along, perhaps a more structured approach to diary entry with specific questions or heading on every page would have been more beneficial. However, there is one follower diary which is very insightful and detailed but given the nature of the content I have had to make the difficult decision not to include the extracts on ethical grounds as the individual could be potentially identified and/or linked to her woman entrepreneur.

Being unable to use a lot of the research diary data within the thesis and its lack of richness was disappointing. As I struggled with how I would then incorporate the diary data I had a research conversation session with a colleague from another institution. From the discussion I decided that given the interview data was so rich and dense this would form the central part of the analysis with research diary extracts used to support or contradict the main interview analysis. If I use research diaries in future studies I will provide a day-by-day structure for participants to complete, rather than an open approach with guidelines to ensure I obtain the depth of data I require. Whilst the data was not perhaps what I hoped for, the research participants did complete the diaries which I view as a success. The women entrepreneurs attributed this to the fact I gave them a "lovely notebook which felt like I getting a present" (Beverley) and made it a "pleasure to write" (Helen). Furthermore because it was a hardcopy rather than an electronic version they said they were more inclined to complete it: "having it sitting on my desk was a constant reminder to fill it in" (Natalie).

Member checking (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) in relation to participants reviewing transcripts, ensuring resonance with research findings, discussing my research within the academic community at seminars and delivering at academic conferences, all contributed to the development of my FSR approach, research design, analysis and interpretations. One such example is an extract from my research diary reflecting upon some feedback I received at a conference when I was just over 18 months into my study that was extremely critical of my approach to data analysis. The gender community I presented to said that I had lost gender completely from the initial analysis of my data:

Although it felt like it was the worst thing to have happened to me, it was actually the best thing that could have happened. It made me revisit my feminist approach and really get to grips with gender and how I would ensure it would be centre stage within my analysis.

Reflecting upon this incident highlighted the importance of presenting and gaining feedback on your methodological approach from different research communities as it was pivotal in refocusing my framework for analysis.

This section has outlined the evaluative framework drawn upon within this thesis to persuade readers of the trustworthiness of the research approach (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). However, as Harding (2007b: 59) aptly states:

No doubt these considerations will not convince some readers. But sometimes we just have to live with uncertainty and anxiety about our belief-choices. Contrary to the claims of some philosophic tendencies, learning to live with cognitive dissonance can be a sign of maturity and creativity. That may be the best that one can hope for.

8.4 Reflexivity and Limitations of the Thesis

8.4.1 Feminist Standpoint Epistemology: In Search of Truth

FSR has received much criticism from postmodern feminists in relation to FSR commitment to situated knowledge (Hekman, 1997a). Feminist postmodernists argue that the presumption of identifying and locating a socially constructed position is impossible and that standpoint epistemology is a science in search of truth (Naples, 2007). Harding (1997) suggests that truth claims are harmless so long as their claims remain within the bounds of the evidence provided. Despite Harding's (1997) response, developments have led to this not only being embraced by feminist postmodernists but feminist theory generally. Consequently, Hekman (1997a) argues that this main distinction between the two epistemologies has almost been eradicated. She suggests that it is Harding's writing that has been most prominent in blurring the boundaries between FSR and feminist postmodernism as she advocates a postmodernist standpoint approach, or as Code (1991: 309) suggests "remapping the epistemic terrain into numerous fluid conversations".

Hekman (1997a) draws upon Haraway's (1988) premise that there are many standpoints to highlight her concerns over the unfeasibility of bringing research to any meaningful conclusion with the multiplicity of standpoints available. Naples (2007) too raises concerns over postmodernism's textual focus, which she believes renders the lived realities of women as irrelevant. Both Hekman (1997a) and Naples (2007) share the concern of losing the ability to speak from any specific group or category resulting in complete relativism, eliminating the possibility of political activism, at the heart of FSR.

FSR's commitment to breaking free from the limits of enlightenment and identified need to work towards a better science to enable political solidarity is something that Harding (2007b) argues post modernism is unable to satisfy. However, it is the depoliticising nature of feminist postmodernism which Naples (2007) suggests is at the root of feminist postmodern discussions. It moves to the extreme end of the spectrum in an attempt to remove itself from any link to essentialism.

Naples (2007) looks to Kruks' (2001) charge that FSR does not preclude the emergence of multi standpoints, which she suggests have the potential to overlap whilst also retaining some radical differences. Naples (2007) reflects on Kruks (2001) assertion and Haraway's (1988) situated knowledge to highlight the value of some postmodern elements for recognising the multiplicity of epistemological locations for a non dominative feminism. Collins (1997: 381) states that whilst she "respects postmodern contributions in deconstructing language of power, standpoint encompasses much more than changing 'the language game'". This thesis agrees that rather than undermining FSR debates and discussions born for the feminist postmodern criticisms have facilitated the development and revision of FSR as scholars reflected upon challenges to account for critiques of discourse, power and the fluidity of subjectivities (Naples, 2007).

8.4.2 Relativism

Relativism is a frequently cited criticism of FSR and is an old issue in relation to ethics, but the criticism is new in relation to epistemic relativism (Harding, 2007b). Harding (2007b) argues that the understanding that all knowledge is socially situated leaves FSR, along with postmodernism and post colonial approaches, open to criticism.

Hekman (1997a) identifies the multiplicity of standpoints as the major problem of FSR. Given the multiplicity of standpoints, the social construction of reality and the necessity of an engaged political position she contests the notion that feminist scholars can talk about better accounts of the world. She suggests that we cannot talk about accounts of the world if the multiplicity of standpoints is endless. Hekman (1997a: 359) argues that “coherent analysis becomes impossible because we have too many axes of analysis”. Buzzanell (2003) also recognises the difficulty in attempting to devise an activist position based on diverse standpoints but suggests that the aim is to develop feminist agendas by making sense of the commonalities of women’s lives without denying the differences between and amongst women (Stanley and Wise, 1993). How do we then select the standpoints that are useful to us, and how do we discriminate against those which are not?

Collins (1997) responds to Hekman's (1997a) issue through affirming that standpoint refers to historic group based experiences. She suggests that groups share a permanence over time within which their group experiences go beyond any individual ones. The fluidity of FSR is not to create greater complexity for scholars but rather to increase its sophistication (Collins, 1997) regarding group location and avoid the essentialist charges of its Marxist roots (Hartsock, 1997). Collins (1997) argues that fluidity actually enables a more comprehensive understanding of how institutional power may change and continue to reproduce gender, race and class inequalities. Some level of commonality is required in order “to preserve the analytical and political force of feminist theory” (O’Brien Hallstein, 2000: 4). However, group membership does not authenticate that individuals will necessarily have the same experiences and interpretations but through this argument Collins (1997) asserts that by using ‘group’ as a focal point the possibility for individual agency is created.

Harding (2007b) offers four points for consideration in order to dispel relativist concerns. Firstly, she highlights cultural assumptions and values that have shaped all research yet have remained invisible. She provides the example of medical and health research’s key aim to preserve life as she draws attention to the fact that this very aim is a cultural assumption which may not always be shared by some ethnic or religious communities. However, this knowledge claim is not discredited because it does relieve pain and provide cures.

Harding (2007b) returns to her argument for FSR, that when beginning from women's lives in specific social locations new questions are raised, there is potential for new knowledge, highlighting previously invisible androcentric assumptions and alternative standpoints. Harding's (2007b) second point asserts that knowledge claims will only ever have meaning within their cultural context as the knowledge is always learned and understood through cultural practices. Consequently, when taken out of the cultural context meaning is lost as Harding (2007b) contends it is read through a different set of assumptions. Subsequently, FSR does not remove grounds for empirical adequacy but provides reliable accounts of some parts of women's lived experiences that Harding (2007b) states women must know.

The third point Harding (2007b) makes is that good science should not be prohibited due to a lack of a finite reliable standard. She proposes that we are all required to be responsive and make decisions under pressure in everyday life without the presence of a reliable standard. Harding (2007b) again looks to the medical profession to illustrate her point. As someone's next of kin we are called upon to make decisions. When we do so we draw upon all of the sources available to us to make such a decision and prepare ourselves to be asked to revise our decision should a patient's condition not improve. Harding (2007b: 58) asserts that it is incomprehensible that in this situation someone would become "paralyzed by relativist considerations". She acknowledges that apparent "loss of an absolute standard certainly can feel like an inconvenience" but we always manage to make our way through it to take decisive action. Harding (2007b) contends that it is the value of science, to continue to pursue such breakthroughs without an ideal standard.

Finally, Harding (2007b) argues that if all knowledge is socially located, as FSR asserts, it would be a mistake to maintain that one set of knowledge claims are not empirically accurate. As McCorkel and Myers (2003: 201) highlight "what passes as objective, neutral, and universal knowledge is not", all research is socially situated (McCorkel and Myers, 2003; Collins, 2000; Harding, 1991, Smith, 1987; Hartsock, 1997).

8.4.3 Essentialism

The essentialism critique of FSR stems from early writings which predominated around white women's lives with the presumption that all women (and men) shared the same experiences (Harding, 2007b). Whilst FSR understands that women from different groups experienced different forms of oppression (Harding, 2007b) some FSR scholars continue to write about women's experience and knowledge, focusing on the similarities rather than the differences. Hartsock (1997) herself admits to falling foul of her Marxist roots by not allowing for differences among women and other groups in her 1983 essay *The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism*. It was black women's writings that maintained the need for multiple and conflicting experiences and knowledge claims of women and scholars. FSR was also criticised for not opening up to the possibility of differences between and amongst women and researchers (Harding, 2007b). Essentialism is not a characteristic of FSR and scholars have developed and rearticulated their positions in relation to this critique to acknowledge the differences between and amongst women. However, we are reminded by Weeks (1998: 8) that FSR is "an achieved, constructed collectivity" that contributes to feminist political goals. Consequently FSR is achieved through the analysis of collective viewpoints and conversations within communities of women in marginal social positions (Hartsock, 1997; Collins, 1990).

The next and penultimate section of this final chapter outlines potential areas for future research.

8.5 Future Research

This thesis provides understandings of experiences of gender within entrepreneurial leadership in small firms from both women entrepreneurs' and followers' perspectives offering some discourses and a process of blending which shape their experiences against a backcloth of patriarchy contributing to the female entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial leadership and authentic leadership theory bases.

The backcloth of patriarchy and understanding of gender as a research lens within this thesis could be drawn upon to further explore different aspects of women entrepreneurs' lived experiences. This study fused the emerging authentic leadership theory with other emerging theories. Of interest to this thesis is that gender is drawn upon (Ahl, 2006) as a theoretical research lens to explore experiences from this perspective.

Consideration of the potential insights to be gained from cross national studies would enhance understandings of women's entrepreneurial leadership particularly with the inclusion of countries with advanced egalitarianism such as Nordic countries (Pesonen *et al.*, 2009) and non EU countries. Furthermore, reflection on the sector and industry is also worthy of consideration given the political focus and drive to encourage more women entrepreneurs to enter the science, engineering and technology sectors in the UK.

Exploring the differences within and between women's experiences operating their businesses within traditionally male dominated sectors and industries would provide further insights. Whilst negotiating access within small businesses was notably difficult (see Section 5.5) perhaps further in-depth case studies focusing upon more than one follower and incorporating participant observation over a long time period would provide deeper insights into women's experiences and follower perceptions and overcome followers reluctance to participate in some cases. Also, four out of the five case studies had a family member working for them, therefore, exploring experiences and perceptions of entrepreneurial leadership in relation to women and their followers with family connections would be interesting in terms of blurring public and private spaces (Gherardi, 1994).

Future research that incorporates women from different ethnic backgrounds would provide further insight into different ethnic standpoints particularly given that black women are the largest ethnic group participating in entrepreneurial activity in the UK (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2004) and Walby's (1989) contention that the private sphere is a place from which black women draw strength but is a place of oppression for white women. Furthermore exploring women entrepreneurs' experiences through a disability lens would also provide new insights into the entrepreneurship field.

Although this research did not seek to, nor ethically permit (see section 5.9), the exploration of authentic leadership in action through the pairing up of respective leaders and followers to understand experiences of gender, future studies with larger samples exploring the leader-follower dyad would offer a useful contribution to the emerging authentic leadership theory base. Furthermore, research exploring women entrepreneurs' experiences of similar ages and life stages would also provide greater insight in relation to authenticity and the career theory base.

Whilst this study was useful in highlighting some key issues for consideration and development of understandings of women entrepreneurial leadership further exploration is required into what is authentic space for women entrepreneur leaders. What is the space of 'it's still me' what does it look and feel like?

8.6 Personal Reflections on my Research Journey

Given my FSR approach and the importance of positionality (McCorkel and Myers, 2003), I now reflect upon where I am personally and professionally as a consequence of embarking upon this Doctoral research.

As I draw this thesis to a close and reflect upon the personal experiences which led me to this research in Chapter One, the Doctoral process has developed my understanding of gender, gendered and gendering. Moreover, it has also raised my awareness of the myriad of feminisms available and negative connotations attached to feminism (Nicolson, 1996) which has supported the development of my own understanding of gender and feminism. Exploring such understandings has increased my confidence in discussing issues of gender within my teaching and when disseminating my research. Furthermore it has accentuated my commitment to raising awareness of gender as something that we all *do*, *say* and *interpret* within our everyday lives (Martin, 2006). However, most importantly this understanding has increased my own awareness of how my behaviour, performed through my socially perceived female body (Mavin and Grandy, 2010), may be interpreted by others, both within an organisational and social context. It highlights the challenges that I may face as I progress within the academy as a woman conducting feminist research who in the future would like to progress to senior management and also be a mother.

Reflecting upon my progression within the Doctoral process to this point of submission, the research journey has challenged me intellectually and tested my resilience to continue. My resolve to overcome the difficulties I experienced within this study has increased my confidence in problem solving within an academic context and highlighted my personal determination which I will require as I progress through the organisation and start a family.

As an early career researcher I feel the experience has increased my self confidence and will support my credibility with corporate clients as I begin my journey as a Lecturer within the Corporate and Executive Development Centre of Newcastle Business School. Undertaking this research has provided me with an understanding of entrepreneurial leadership experiences from a gender perspective which I can offer to challenge others underlying assumptions and help them to make sense of their own experiences whilst I also continue to be reflexive in relation to my own experiences and interpretations.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Initial Women Entrepreneur Interview Questions

1. Tell me how you got to here? What's your story? Start as far back as you like.
2. How did you make the move to entrepreneurship? Why?
3. When you made the move to 'entrepreneurship' – how did you prepare yourself personally? How did you feel?
4. Did you receive any leadership training? Do you have any formal leadership qualifications? How did this effect the way you lead?
5. If you were to go back to that time again – to do it all again what would you change?
6. Looking at where you are now, tell me about how you view leadership? Are there any approaches to leadership you particularly follow/use/apply?
7. What's been your biggest learning point as a leader of a small business?
8. Can you tell me about one mistake, one that you are prepared to tell me about – a mistake that's perhaps changed the way you lead?
9. How would you describe yourself as a leader? What words would you use?
10. How would your team describe you as a leader? What words would they use? Why?
11. Who are your peers and how would your peers describe you as a leader? What words would they use? Why?
12. Do you have the same relationships with each member of your team and if so why? And if not why?
13. How does your relationship with your team change in a crisis? What role do you take and why?
14. How would your family describe you as A.) a leader B.) as a family member, what roles do you take in the family?
15. How do you think you are perceived differently as a woman entrepreneur/leader?
16. What has helped or hindered you as a woman entrepreneur/leader?
17. Are there any regional influences on the way you lead? If so how do they influence the way you lead?
18. How do you introduce yourself? What title do you give yourself?

Appendix 2: Initial Follower Interview Questions

1. Tell me how (why and when) you got to be in your current role?
2. How did you feel when you first started to work here?
3. How does it compare to other places you have worked? Why?
4. Looking at where you are now, tell me about how you view leadership? Are there any approaches to leadership you particularly like?
5. How would you describe your leader to a new member of staff? What are their strengths and areas for development?
6. What drives/ motivates your leader?
7. Tell me about your relationship with your leader? How does this make you think or feel?
8. Have you ever made a mistake whilst working for your leader that you are prepared to tell me about? How did your leader react? How did this make you feel?
9. Can you tell me if anyone else has had a different experience to you? How and why?
10. How does this compare to other leaders you have worked with? Why?
11. What happens in a crisis, how do they behave? Why?
12. Do you think your relationship/experience with your leader would be different if she were a man?

Appendix 3: Follow-up Interview Questions for Women Entrepreneurs

1. What does being a woman in business mean to you?

[What is her view of herself? Does being a woman in business make a difference?]

2. I view you as an entrepreneur-leader. Do you view yourself as an entrepreneur-leader? Why?

[I give the participant my assumption that I view her to be an entrepreneur leader. I pass this assumption back to her to lead to how she constructs masculinities and femininities? If the participants ask me why I view them as an entrepreneur-leader my reason is that they have set up and lead their own business fusing entrepreneurial and leadership activities]

3. How would you describe a successful entrepreneur?

[How does she construct the discourse of entrepreneur, using masculinities or femininities?]

4. How would you describe a successful leader?

[How does she construct the discourse of leader using masculinities or femininities? Does she describe entrepreneur and leader in the same way?]

5. What is your natural leadership style? How would you describe your own leadership style in business - what words would you use?

6. Can you give me any examples of how you behave in a crisis?

7. Can you give me any examples of how you behave when a decision or business venture goes well?

8. What words would you use to describe your behaviour?

[What masculinities and femininities does she draw upon to describe herself? Particularly in extreme situations (crisis or success) where she will react and behave naturally.]

9. Can you tell me about a critical incident that has perhaps changed the way that you behave when leading your business? E.g. client complaint, staff issues etc

[Gardner et al suggest that trigger events along with an individual's life history provides the background to authentic leadership development.]

10. Can you describe your values – by values I mean what matters to you? What do you hold dear? Examples honesty, achievement, work ethic, achievement

11. How does this affect the choices or decisions you make?

[Do the participants 'know' and 'show' themselves as authentic leadership development requires. Are their values more masculine or feminine.]

12. How do your values support and energise you as a leader?

[Do the participants values provide the foundation of their leadership experience as Authentic Leadership suggests]

13. Where do they potentially cause conflict?

14. Reflecting on your leadership style that you've described what sources have shaped the way that you lead? Examples: career experience, education, childhood, family.

[Gardner et al highlight that individual's life history provides the context of authentic leadership development]

15. Would your employees describe you in the same way that you describe yourself? What words would they use to describe your leadership style?

[Do they think/feel that their followers translate their behaviours in the same way? Eagly places great emphasis on identification and Jensen and Luthans on the importance of translation between leader and follower]

16. Do you think/feel that your employees understand you and what you are trying to do? Why? Can you give me an example?

[How do they think/feel their employees interpret them – is there congruence?]

17. How do you persuade or negotiate people to follow you?

[Eagly suggests that authentic leadership is relational therefore to know and show one's self is not enough. Followers must identify with the leader's values in order to bestow them the legitimacy to convey the values of the community as a whole. Eagly suggests that women (as members of an outsider group) must persuade or negotiate their position?]

18. How do you build trust so that your employees are engaged?

[trust and engagement are key follower outputs of authentic leadership framework]

19. In an ideal world how would you like to lead or be described as a leader?

[Do the women 'temper' their true self as Eagly suggests they should do if they are to retain their leadership position]

20. Are there any leaders that you respect enough to emulate? What is it about them that you like?

[Gardner et al suggest that role models may have a strong prominence in leaders' personal history]

21. Do you think/feel you can always be yourself when running your business? Why?

22. Tell me about a time when you were allowed to be yourself? How does this make you think/feel?

23. Tell me about a time when you were not allowed to be yourself? How does this make you think/feel?

[Do they make any sacrifices in relation to authenticity as a consequence of conforming to the perceived entrepreneurial norm? Do feel marked by their difference (Lewis, 2006).]

24. What has hindered you? Do you feel held back as a woman? Why? Can you give me an example?

25. What has not worked so well? Why?

26. Do people find you credible as a woman entrepreneur –leader?

[Do they think/feel that their membership within an outsider group has been to their detriment? In what ways? Eagly suggests that for members of outsider groups they are perceived as illegitimate by their very membership therefore they, more than most, must either persuade/ negotiate with followers to find a balance. Have the women in my study had to engage in any persuasion or negotiation?]

27. Do you ever feel like the odd one out in running your business? Why? Can you give me an example?

28. What has helped you as a women entrepreneur-leader?

29. What has worked well? Why?

[Have communal behaviours/ their gender role been advantageous for them in certain circumstances]

30. What advice would you pass onto a woman just starting her own business?

[what are her lessons from playing the game? How does she manage/ negotiate her position as a woman entrepreneur-leader as Eagly suggest as woman she must do. What works what does not work]

Appendix 4: Follow-up Interview Questions for Followers

1. What does having a woman boss mean to you?

[What is their view of their woman entrepreneur? Does being led by a woman make a difference?] This question refers to the followers perception of the woman entrepreneur as a member of an outsider group.

2. How would you describe your boss? What words would you use? e.g. decisive, driven, compassionate

I am asking the followers their view of their woman entrepreneur offering examples of possible descriptions to lead to their own. What masculinities and femininities do they followers draw upon to describe their woman entrepreneur.

a. How would you describe a successful entrepreneur? What words would you use? e.g. risk taker, innovator

How do they construct the discourse of entrepreneur, using masculinities or femininities?]

b. How would you describe a successful leader? What words would you use? e.g. directive, considerate,

How do they construct the discourse of leader using masculinities or femininities? Do they describe entrepreneur and leader in the same way?

3. What is [woman entrepreneur's name] natural/consistent/normal leadership style? How would you describe her leadership style in business - what words would you use?

a. Can you give me any examples of how she behaves when a decision or business venture goes well?

b. Can you describe how she behaves in a crisis?

c. What words would you use to describe her behaviour?

What masculinities and femininities do they draw upon to describe their woman entrepreneur's leadership style? Particularly in extreme situations (crisis or success), where she will react and behave naturally.

d. Can you tell me about a time when [woman entrepreneurs name] changed or adapted her behaviour because of an event or circumstance? E.g. client complainant, staff issues

[Gardner et al suggest that trigger events provides the background to authentic leadership development. Are followers aware of such trigger events– do the women entrepreneurs relate transparently?]

e. Can you describe [women entrepreneur's name] values – by values I mean what matters to her? What does she hold dear? Examples honesty, achievement, work ethic, achievement

i. How does this affect the choices or decisions she makes?

Do the followers think/feel that the women entrepreneurs 'knows' and 'shows' herself as authentic leadership development requires. How

do the followers interpret their woman entrepreneurs values - more masculine or feminine?

f. How do her values support and energise her as a leader?

Do follower's transparently see how their women entrepreneurs' values provide the foundation of their leadership experience as Authentic Leadership suggests

i. Where do [woman entrepreneur's name] values potentially cause conflict?

[Is there a conflict between agentic and communal]

ii. Does she persuade or negotiate with you to follow her?

iii. If yes – how?

iv. If no – tell me why you follow her? What happens?

[Eagly suggests that authentic leadership is relational followers must identify with the leader's values in order to bestow them the legitimacy to convey the values of the community as a whole. Eagly suggests that women (as members of an outsider group) must persuade or negotiate their position? Do followers think/feel that the woman entrepreneur persuades or negotiates with them? I use a closed question with follow ups for both so that I do not assume that they are persuaded or engaged in negotiation]

v. Do you trust [woman entrepreneur's name]?

vi. Why?

[Trust and engagement are key follower outputs of authentic leadership framework. Are they outcomes that have been achieved or are yet to be achieved? How do the women entrepreneurs achieve/ work towards achieving?]

Would you be comfortable for [woman entrepreneur's name] to see your transcript? Why?

Regards managing the ethical issues I will ask the followers to sign off their transcript and then ask them if they are happy for their leader to see it and why.

g. Would she describe herself in the same way that you have described her? What words would [woman entrepreneur's name] use to describe her leadership style?

[Do the followers think/feel that their woman entrepreneur is self aware or is there a discrepancy between self awareness and follower identification? i.e. do they believe that their woman entrepreneur has the same of herself that they hold of her. Eagly places great emphasis on identification and Jensen and Luthans on the importance of translation between leader and follower]

h. In an ideal world how would you like to be led?

[Do the followers 'temper' their leader expectations because they are led by a woman? Because of women's outsider group membership do they expect less in terms of leadership because they expect she must perform to socially accepted role of being a 'woman' first]

i. Are there any other leaders that you respect? What is it about them that you like?

[Gardner et al suggest that role models have a strong prominence in leaders' personal history therefore through positive modelling this would be encouraged in followers to identify role models. This will help to understand how and why they construct leadership and entrepreneurship the way that they do]

4. What is positive about having [woman entrepreneur's name] as a women boss?

i. What has worked well? Why? In what context?

[Do the followers believe communal behaviours/ the women entrepreneurs gender role, has been advantageous in certain circumstances]

5. What isn't so positive about having [woman entrepreneur's name] as a woman boss?

i. In what context

ii. What has not worked so well? Why?

iii. Do you find [woman entrepreneur's name] credible as a woman entrepreneur –leader? By credible I mean trustworthy, believable, convincing as a leader, why?

[Do they think/feel that having a woman entrepreneur as the leader of their business has been detrimental due to their membership within an outsider group? In what ways? Eagly suggests that for members of outsider groups they are perceived as illegitimate by their very membership therefore they, more than most, must either persuade/ negotiate with followers to find a balance. Do the followers in my study think/feel it is necessary for women entrepreneur to prove their credibility through persuasion or negotiation?]

Appendix 5: Organisational Consent



RESEARCH ORGANISATION INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Newcastle Business School
University of Northumbria

Completion of this form is required whenever research is being undertaken by NBS staff or students within any organisation. This applies to research that is carried out on the premises, or is about an organisation, or members of that organisation or its customers, as specifically targeted as subjects of research.

The researcher must supply an explanation to inform the organisation of the purpose of the study, who is carrying out the study, and who will eventually have access to the results. In particular issues of anonymity and avenues of dissemination and publications of the findings should be brought to the organisations' attention.

Researcher's Name: **Nicola Patterson**
Student ID No. (if applicable): **04922813**

Researcher's Statement:

Research Purpose

The purpose of the study is to explore dual perspectives of leading (i.e. perspectives of entrepreneurs and their employees) and how gender is experienced in a small firm setting in the UK. The research will be conducted in North East England.

Parties Involved?

- The entrepreneur/founder/business owner.
- Self selected employees that you are happy to participate. The researcher will send an email to the entrepreneur explaining the nature of the research and their expected role as an employee. Employees will then submit their expression of interest to the entrepreneur and researcher by email.
- The research will be conducted by Nicola Patterson, a first year doctoral student at Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University. Nicola's background is in small business and enterprise development therefore she will be investing her own views and engaging with participants during the data collection process.
- Organization and individual participation is entirely voluntary and each may withdraw at any time.

Research Methods

A number of research methods will be employed; interviews, participant observation and research diaries. All research participants will be distributed with an individual Informed Consent form which they must sign and return to the researcher before the interview can take place. This may be done by returning the signed hard copy in the post or by sending an email confirming their consent from their own personal email account. All interviews will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and transcribed. All participants will be provided with their own research diary to complete.

Location of Research

- Participant observation will take place on business premises.
- The interviews will take place at a location of the research participants' choice, preferably not the businesses premises.

Timescale

The data collection timescale is from January 2008 – October 2008.

Time Commitment

Entrepreneur

- An initial meeting or telephone call of approximately half an hour to discuss the research process in more detail which will also allow you to decide whether you would like your company to participate in the research.
- An initial interview with the entrepreneur for approximately 1.5 – 2 hours.
- Transcripts will then be emailed back to the entrepreneur to be reviewed (either with amendments, deletions or additions) approximately 1 hour.
- A follow up interview with the entrepreneur will take place approximately 3-4 months from the initial interview for approximately 1.5 – 2 hours.
- Transcripts will then be emailed back to the entrepreneur to be reviewed (either with amendments, deletions or additions) approximately 1 hour
- Allow the researcher into your company and observe the day-to-day operations for a 2 week period (negotiable) within that time at least 1 day of shadowing the entrepreneur. This will occur approximately 2 months post initial interview and 2 months pre follow up interview.
- Complete a diary over the research period (from initial interview to follow up interview) recording significant thoughts and feelings.
- Any other meetings deemed necessary for the research upon negotiation with the entrepreneur.

Employees

- An initial interview with the employee/s of the business for approximately 1.5 – 2 hours.
- Transcripts will then be emailed back to employee/s to be reviewed (either with amendments, deletions or additions) approximately 1 hour.
- A follow up interview with employee/s will take place approximately 3-4 months from the initial interview for approximately 1.5 – 2 hours.
- Transcripts will then be emailed back to employee/s to be reviewed (either with amendments, deletions or additions) approximately 1 hour
- Allow the researcher to shadow and observe the day-to-day operations for a 2 week period (negotiable) within that time at least 1 day of shadowing employee/s. This will occur approximately 2 months post initial interview and 2 months pre follow up interview.
- Complete a diary over the research period (from initial interview to follow up interview) recording significant thoughts and feelings.
- Any other meetings deemed necessary for the research upon negotiation with the employee.

Anonymity

All information in this study will be anonymised, with all names of organizations and people changed.

Confidentiality

All data will be stored securely either electronically on computer or in hard copy version in a locked cupboard. As part of the data analysis process, hard copies of the anonymised transcripts (raw data) may be given to the doctoral supervision team and a small number of other research participants to review to ensure that the researcher's analysis has resonance. Hard copies will be returned to the researcher and will not remain in the possession of the research participants.

Research Dissemination

Data obtained through this research will be reproduced and published in a variety of forms and for a variety of audiences related to the broad nature of the research detailed above (i.e. conferences, peer reviewed journals, articles etc.).

Queries

Please direct any queries regarding this research to Nicola Patterson on +44 191 2274643 or +447875392245 or Nicola.patterson@unn.ac.uk

Any organisation manager or representative who is empowered to give consent may do so here:

Name: _____

Position/Title: _____

Organisation Name: _____

Location: _____

Anonymity must be offered to the organisation if it does not wish to be identified in the research report. Confidentiality is more complex and cannot extend to the markers of student work or the reviewers of staff work, but can apply to the published outcomes. If confidentiality is required, what form applies?

- ☐ No confidentiality required
- ☐ Masking of organisation name in research report
- ☐ No publication of the research report

Signature: _____ Date: _____

This form can be signed via email if the accompanying email is attached with the signer's personal email address included. The form cannot be completed by phone, rather should be handled via post.

Appendix 6: Individual Consent Forms



Newcastle Business School Informed Consent Form

Title of Research	Dual perspectives of leading in small firms: How is the 'G' factor experienced?
Name Researcher	Nicola Patterson
Name of supervising academic (where appropriate)	Prof Sharon Mavin and Jane Turner
Address for correspondence	Nicola Patterson, Newcastle Business School, City Campus East, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 8ST
Telephone	Office: +44 191 227 4643 Mobile: +44 7875 392245
E-mail	nicola.patterson@unn.ac.uk
Description of the broad nature of the research	To gather data to explore leading experiences of entrepreneurs and their employees in small firms in North East England.
Description of the involvement expected of participants including the broad nature of questions to be answered or events to be observed or activities to be undertaken, and the expected time commitment	<p>The expected involvement of the research participants is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial interview (approximately 1.5 – 2 hours) • Overt participant observation (approximately a 2 week duration) • Follow up interview (approximately 1.5 – 2 hours). • Research diary (recording key or significant events) • Any other meetings deemed necessary for the research upon negotiation with the research participant. <p>The interviews will be semi structured and based upon the entrepreneurs' experiences of leading in small firms.</p> <p>The initial interview questions will be exploratory in nature and focus on the entrepreneurs' journey of becoming a leader and the individuals' self perception within this role.</p>

	<p>The follow up interview questions will be informed by the issues arising from data collected in the initial interview and participant observation.</p> <p>All interviews will be recorded with a digital voice recorder and transcribed.</p> <p>Anonymity will be assured by changing the names of the participants, the organizations and people that they name during the interview in the transcripts.</p> <p>Interview transcripts will be emailed back to participants for reviewing and agreement. Participants are free to make any amendments, deletions or additions to the transcripts.</p> <p>Confidentiality will be maintained in terms of storing data securely on computer and ensuring hard copies of transcripts and field notes are stored in a locked cupboard.</p> <p>All data will be stored securely either electronically on computer or in hard copy version in a locked cupboard. As part of the data analysis process, hard copies of the anonymised transcripts (raw data) may be given to the doctoral supervision team and a small number of other research participants to review to ensure that the researcher's analysis has resonance. Hard copies will be returned to the researcher and will not remain in the possession of the research participants.</p> <p>Data will be used and reproduced as case studies in a variety of research publications.</p>
Additional information about the research	The data collection timescale of this study is from January 2008 - October 2008.

Information obtained in this study be anonymous (i.e. individuals and organisations will not be identified *unless this is expressly excluded in the details given above*).

Data obtained through this research may be reproduced and published in a variety of forms and for a variety of audiences related to the broad nature of the research detailed above. It will not be used for purposes other than those outlined above without your permission. Participation is entirely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time.

Northumbria University is the data controller under the Data Protection Act (1998)

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this study on the basis of the above information.

Participant's signature

Date

Please keep one copy of this form for your own records

Appendix 7: Staff Ethical Issues Form

**Newcastle Business School
Staff Research and Consultancy
Ethical Issues Form**



Staff Name:	Nicola Patterson
Portfolio Area:	Organization and Human Resource Management
Title of Research / Consultancy Project:	Dual perspectives of leading in small firms: How is the 'G' factor experienced?
Please categorise your research as: Learning & Pedagogical Discipline based Contribution to practice A multiple of the above	A multiple of the categories
How does this research fit in with the NBS ADP? – Which area of excellence from the ADP does the research address? – i.e: Business & Management Practice Leadership & Management Development International Business	Leadership & Management Development
Start Date of Research	December 2007

	Comments
Brief description of the proposed research methods including, in	Human subjects will participate in two semi structured interviews (an initial interview and

particular, whether human subjects will be involved and how.	follow up interview post participant observation), participant observation and in maintaining their own research diary.
Ethical issues that may arise (if none, state "None" and give reasons)	The data provided by the participants may be of sensitive nature; therefore the raw data must not get into the public domain. The research does not involve children or vulnerable adults.
How will the ethical issues be addressed? (if none state n/a)	<p>Organizational consent forms detailing the nature of the research, approximate time commitments for both the entrepreneur and the employee will be obtained from the entrepreneur to allow interviews, participant observation and research diaries to be conducted within their business. A copy of the organizational consent form will be provided for their own records.</p> <p>All individual research participants that are interviewed and maintain a research diary will be given an informed consent form to sign. This details the exact nature of the research, their expected time commitment, data storage etc. A copy of this will be given to each individual for their own records.</p> <p>All data obtained will be anonymised with names of participants changed. Organizations and people named during the data collection process will also be omitted or changed. Electronic forms of the raw data will be securely stored on the computer and hard copies will be locked in a secure cupboard.</p> <p>As part of the data analysis process, hard copies of the anonymised transcripts may be given to the supervision team and a small number of other research participants to review to ensure that the researcher's analysis has resonance. Hard copies will be returned to the researcher and will not remain in the possession of the research participants.</p> <p>It is explicit in the organizational consent forms and the individual consent forms for</p>

	the entrepreneur and the employee that data obtained in this research will be reproduced and published as case studies in a variety of forms and for a variety of audiences.
Has informed consent of research participants been considered? If appropriate, has an informed consent form been completed?	Informed consent has been considered and will be implemented with all research participants that are interviewed and maintain research diary. Individual informed consent forms will be completed upon negotiation with the potential participating businesses.
Has organisational consent been considered? If appropriate, has an organisational consent form been completed?	Organizational consent has been considered and will be implemented with all participating organizations. Organizational consent forms will be completed upon negotiation of access with the entrepreneurs.

Staff Signature (indicating that the research will be conducted in conformity with the above and agreeing that any significant change in the research project will be notified and a further "Ethical Issues Form" submitted.

Date: **Staff Signature:**.....

Line Manager:

I confirm that I have read this form and I believe the proposed research will not breach University policies.

Date:..... **Signature:**.....

Please Note:

The appropriate completion of this form is a critical component of the University Policy on Ethical Issues in Research and Consultancy. If further advice is required, please contact the School Ethics Sub Committee through the Research and Divisional Office in the first instance.

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